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Charivaria

ATTENTION has been drawn to the great number of well-known sportsmen who have joined the Services. We wondered why most newspapers had been reduced in size.

It is stated that after an air-raid warning residents of a block of flats passed the time in the shelter with friendly games of bridge. It takes a war to make bridge friendly.

"If Wardens patrol after the warning has been given without their clothing the tendency of the public is to come out of doors. . . ."—*Local A.R.P. circular.*

Who found that out?

It is thought that one reason why Herr HITLER did not declare war on Poland is that he expects to be eligible for next year's Nobel Peace Prize.



Amusement was caused at a South Coast beach by a man bathing in his steel helmet. Apparently he takes a large size in steel helmets.

We hear that there is such a shortage of raw materials in Germany that substitutes are now being made for ersatz.



One of the most touching incidents during mobilisation was the reunion of two tins of plum-and-apple jam which went through the last war together unscathed.

Persia is reorganising its aerial forces. In an emergency all privately-owned magic carpets can be quickly mobilised to repel invaders.

Germans who break into houses during an air-raid alarm are now liable to capital punishment. This of course does not apply to Germans who break into other people's countries.

Reinforced Concrete

"So it has come at last! The hopes and fears of the past years all are liquidated in the concrete fact that the struggle has commenced."—*Staffordshire Paper.*

A correspondent suggests that when HITLER first protested years ago that all he wanted was peace we should have given him Ireland. That would have fooled him.

"Germans now know where they stand."—*Dr. Goebbels.* In a queue waiting for three-quarters of an ounce of synthetic tea.





"I suppose you've got a husband in every port?"

Evacuation of Our Office

"THIS place," said the chief, trying on two or three pairs of his spectacles hurriedly and peering round at the long windows, "is a glass-house, nothing more." We agreed, not for the first time, muttering "Nothing more" under our breaths like self-conscious participators in a toast. Henry, apt to take the gloomy view, said that as soon as anything was dropped within two miles of it all the windows would fly out and the international situation would be at an end as far as we were concerned. I didn't think it was as bad as all that, but I did agree that it was nothing more than a glass-house.

So we began to pack up parcels.

The chief packed the telephone directories and his *History of Old London* in one parcel and half the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in another, and locked the letter-scales in his top left-hand drawer as a precaution against looting. He also put his spare

lower denture in his waistcoat pocket, moved it into his breast pocket, and finally packed it in a cardboard box labelled "Mammoth Drawing Pins," which he threw over to Henry to go with the stationery.

I suggested that the parcels might be too heavy for the post, and when the idea was pooh-poohed I lugged them down to the basement and had them weighed. One weighed twenty-seven-and-a-half pounds and the other thirty-two. "Is that too much?" asked the chief, whom I returned to find walking briskly to and fro with a dozen patent-medicine bottles on a blotting-pad, and when I said I thought the limit was twelve pounds and he had rung up a friend of his in the Dead Letter Office to confirm and complain, he unpacked them with a little private sigh and threw them in a heap under the biggest window. I said couldn't they go by goods, but Henry said he didn't suppose there would be

any more goods trains ever, so we left them there.

When I got back from lunch the chief was standing over Henry explaining a theory of his about knots. He had learnt his lesson; on the table were some thirty packages about the size of biggish boxes of chocolates. The chief had taken off his coat and wrapped up the first one himself. The whole thing had been systematically carried out, each parcel bearing a code indication of its contents in the chief's flowing hand.

"You'd better know about this," he said to me, "in case anything happens to any of us." He popped three or four peppermints into his mouth with an adroit wrist movement, changing his glasses with the other hand. "For instance, when you want note-paper you look through the parcels"—he scrambled amongst them, knocking half a dozen on to the floor—"until you come to one marked 'N.P.'"

like this." He paused. The bundle he held in his hands was a long thin affair.

"Not that one, Sir," said Henry. "If you remember, you marked that one N.P., meaning 'Not Pencils.'"

"What is it, then?"

"Paper-knives," said Henry, avoiding my eye.

The chief said he couldn't think why Henry had packed the paper-knives, as they could easily be bought when we got there. ("There" was the chief's house on one of the nicer coasts. He was giving up his drawing-room to us.) "Well," he said with a wave of the hand, "you see the idea." And after unpacking the paper-knives and locking them in the bottom of the book-case, adding his spare hat and a boomerang-shaped ruler as an afterthought, he went out.

Henry and I waited until he had been back for his jacket and then settled down to a bit of day's work. Henry said he hadn't bothered to remind him that he'd packed the paper-knives himself. Those little things seemed unimportant nowadays.

When the chief came back he brought a paper-bag full of iced cakes and an enormous cheap suitcase. "This," he said, holding out the paper-bag but speaking of the suitcase, "will hold all the stuff we actually have to take with us." We took a glutinous cake apiece, mumbling our gratitude. "Till then you'd better pack it every night and one of you take it home with you."

Henry took it home the first night and it fell open at Haywards Heath. I took it home the next night and the handle pulled out at Victoria. The third night the chief took it home with a sash-cord round it and it never came back, because we followed it down next morning. Things had begun to move.

I was the first to get "there." The chief waved to me from the steps, where he was taking in a multitude of parcels, explaining to the postman in familiar terms the dangers of our evacuated office. After asking me how many parcels there ought to be and observing before I could speak that he needed some help with a trestle-table and had hired two typewriters which wanted fetching, he said that he had got his wrong glasses on and couldn't remember packing the cheque-books. He also pointed out the car of his next-door neighbour, parked as usual where the chief wanted to park his own.

I began to say something, but he ran upstairs.

When Henry arrived later, bringing a few last-minute pieces of office equipment, including the chief's gas-

mask and two woollen waistcoats found in his desk, I was putting up a notice on the front-door.

"Everybody out of our building?" I asked, feeling in my pocket for drawing-pins.

Henry gave me a curious look.

"For the time being," he said. "There's a notice on the door there as well."

"A notice?"

"It says, 'A.R.P. Shelter for 700 people,'" said Henry, and went upstairs with the news. I listened attentively, and heard the chief's voice, muffled by distance and brown-paper.

"Nothing more," I murmured dutifully, placing half a set of false teeth on the top step.

Wardens

GONE are the lights of London Town,
Gone is the Neon show—
Now in the street I kiss my sweet,
Nobody else will know.

Gone are the blinding Gorgon-eyes
Of the swift and terrible cars—
Once again we may see you plain,
Stars.

Minority Report

"WORLD FIGHT POSTPONED"
"Evening Standard" heading, Sept. 9



"I think somebody must have dropped this."

Poland

"BECAUSE we wrecked your homesteads,
Because we razed your farms
The children have risen against us
And the old men take up arms.
We have slain your women in childbirth,
The dying have fought by the dead—
You have broken the rules of battle,"
The Enemy said.

"We thought you maimed and helpless,
The fight passed by the field,
But the schoolboys stand in the trenches
And the wounded will not yield,
And the girls have stayed with their mothers
And the wife at her husband's side—
Our patience is exhausted,"
The Enemy cried.

"Burning before our armies,
We flung you death from the air,
We struck and we gave no warning,
We struck and we did not spare;
But still there are shots in the darkness,
And now we must murder more.
You have broken," the Enemy murmured,
"The faith of war."

EVOR.

From the Home Front

WE had some fun with what has been described as "Britain's First Raid." From 6.30 in the morning onwards there was marked activity, fighter planes buzzed overhead, occasional booms were heard in the distance, and we stood by ready to polish off any marauder crafty enough to get through the outer defences. Nothing happened except that the hour of breakfast came and went, and only Rumour filled our aching stomachs. There were ten enemy planes, there were seventy. They were approaching from the north, from the south; they had turned away; eleven had been brought down in a daring attack on Hornchurch; it was definitely established that Goering himself was leading the raid. All these things were bruited about our little encampment—about which I dare not say more than that it is just opposite the "M" in "THAMES"—and all found instant belief in one quarter or another. I see no harm in this. The papers continually caution their readers against Rumour and rumour-mongers, but personally I am all for it. It is a good deal more exciting than the news and only a little less reliable. There is a very powerful rumour here at the moment, started, I believe, by Gunner Briggs, who has a sister in the War Office—or maybe it's this sister's fiancé who is in the War Office; it doesn't matter, the point is that Gunner Briggs started it, and even that doesn't matter much—anyway the rumour is that we are going to Egypt. Asked why we should go to Egypt, Briggs shrugs his shoulders and suggests it may perhaps be to relieve the Regulars. Gunner Robinson laughs bitterly at this and opines that we may be going to sandbag the Pyramids. He says they would hardly keep us sandbagging for eight hours a day unless they were training us up for something really big in that line.

On the whole, opinion now tends to the view that we are

not going to Egypt, the more hopeful putting forward the theory that we might go to India. Personally, I feel this latter idea to be an example of wishful-thinking. An anti-aircraft unit ought to have a fairly carefree time in India; they have so few raids there. But the authorities have probably thought of that.

Gunner Furr gave a party last night. A good deal of organisation goes to the making of a successful party here. Shops are outside our radius of action, so that we are obliged to rely on parcels from thoughtful relatives and an occasional tin of sardines or what-not purchased by a kindly dispatch rider. Last night's menu shows, I think, what the Army can do when it puts its whole heart into an undertaking. Here it is:—

*Cold Ham and Chutney
Bread and Butter*

*Sardines
Bread and Butter*

*Tinned Lobster
Bread and Butter*

Cake

*Fruit Salad
Tinned Devonshire Cream*

*Cheese and Pickled Onions
Bread and Butter*

Chocolates

*Sherry
An Italian Wine
Mild-and-Bitter*

You can't get a supper like that at the Ritz.

There was also some tinned salmon, which for some reason we did not eat, and some jam tartlets, which I omitted to include in the menu, because people ate them at all stages of the meal, and it would give a wrong impression to allot them a particular position. If any reader, without experience of military life, doubts the possibility of eating such a meal and surviving, let me say that Gunners Furr, Briggs, Robinson, Charles and McEnty, and Lance-Bombardier Morris, all of whom were present at the board, are prepared to swear that the particulars given above are correct. Even if the good faith of half a dozen gunners is called in question, the word of a Lance-Bombardier must stand.

About this Italian wine. I am sorry to be so vague, but the fact is that the bottle was produced from some age-old hiding-place by the landlord of a local inn, and the label proved to be so begrimed by the years as to be indecipherable. The wine was red, not too dry, and very warming. It certainly lost nothing through being drunk out of the same tin mug as the sherry. As for the mild-and-bitter, enriched by the savour of the two previous wines it had almost the smoothness and charm of "black velvet." I wish I could speak as highly of the influence of chutney, sardines and lobster on fruit salad.

Somebody is calling my name. Probably I am wanted to perform a mission of great secrecy and delicacy; my Captain has decided that I and I alone am the man to take the news that we are three short on pilchard-tins from Aix to Ghent. Well, if it means that I'm going to get outside this encampment for an hour or so, I'm all for it.

H. F. E.



VIVE L'ENTENTE

"I think our fathers fought together."

Opinion in Lambeth

"EVENIN', all," said Mr. Pinkin, Jr., as he came into the living-room of 61, Cosham House, Lambeth. "Sorry I'm late but—" He stopped short and turned towards his sister. "Scuse me, Tillie," he said, "d'you mind tellin' me what's on the table?"

Miss Tillie Pinkin, who was studying *Prof. Wissel's Pocket Guide to Palmistry* (she had discovered so far that she was Industrious, Affectionate, Slipshod, Practical, Artistic, Unemotional and Recklessly Impetuous), tried to sum up her chaotic personality in a cryptic smile. "Yerse, Perce," she said. "Col' roce-beef, pickoos, beer, an' chocklit mrang. Why?"

Mr. Pinkin, Jr., breathed a sigh of relief. "Coo!" he said. "I bin san'baggin' agen all day, an' what with seein' so much san' an' avin' such a consoomin' thirst I was afraid I was seein' a mirage."

"I dessay it'll fade away quick enough once you get near it, anyway," said Mrs. Pinkin. "Ow did you do to-day?"

"Well, Ma," said Mr. Pinkin, Jr., "I'm kinda disappointed. Ole Tissock come up to me at seven an' 'e says, 'Perce,' 'e says, 'it's time you knocked orf an' went 'ome,' 'e says. 'I'm goin',' 'e says, 'an' it's no use keepin' a putter-inner workin' when the stacker-upper's gorn.' 'Mr. Tissock,' I says, me eyes streamin' with tears, 'please, please let me fill jus' one more bag. I bin at it since eight a.m., an' I done nine 'undrid an' ninety-nine thousand nine 'undrid an' ninety-nine bags. Jus' one more,' I says, 'an' I'll 'ave done a million.' 'No, Perce,' says ole Tissock, 'it's no use tryin' to make up for los' time at the las' minute, so pop orf.' So 'ere I am."

"Glad you told us," Tillie said. "You alwers come in so fairy-like an' leave such lovely muddy feet-marks all over the carpet I'm sure we'd never notice you if you didn't mention it."

"Well," said Mr. Pinkin, "I'll say one thing for this 'ere war: it do act as a kinda conglomerator. 'Ere it is gorn 'alf-pas' seven, an' there's me at 'ome readin' a page of a book, there's your Ma at 'ome knittin' a slipover that looks like a 'angover, there's Tillie at 'ome studyin' the occult sciences, an' there's Perce at 'ome jus' bein' 'is usual 'ungry self. Quite like a reg'lar Victorian fam'ly. 'Ist'ry repeatin' itself, see?"

"'Ist'ry repeatin' my foot!" Tillie said. "We got far more things not to go to of an evenin' than what they 'ad. D'you reelise, f'rinstance, that I 'aven't seen Clark Gable for three weeks?"

"Never mind," said Mr. Pinkin, Jr., "I dessay 'e remembers you. 'Myrna,' 'e'll say to Miss Loy, 'what's 'appened to that luscious 'ome-made blonde 'oo alwers used to smile at me all sof'-like from the third row of the nines?' 'Why,' Miss Loy'll say, 'aven't you 'eard? She's walkin' out wiv Sid Puckle now. Thinks 'e's lovely, she do. She's even took your photer from over 'er bed an' shoved 'is up, so I reckon she's turned you down, Clark,' she'll say."

"Orl right, orl right!" Tillie shouted. "An' 'oo, may I ask, blushes like a coupla beetroots ev'ry time 'Edy Lamarr's name is brung up?"

"We'll leave my privit life out of it, if you don't mind," said Mr. Pinkin, Jr. "Trouble with you women is you're alwers askin' because you want to tell, an' never because you reely want to know."

"Orl right, orl right——!" Tillie began.

"Jus' because 'ist'ry repeats itself," said Mr. Pinkin, Jr., "there's no reason why *you* should."

"'Oo started this ditto repeato idea?" Tillie demanded.

"It seems abslootly ridickalus to me. William the Conqueror come over in ten sixty-six an' 'e lived until 'e died, an' when 'e died 'e didn't live no more. I mean no one said, 'Claude, it's eleven eighty-seven. I think we'll 'ave William the Conqueror agen.' I s'pose *you* think if on'y you watch life long enough you'll be able to say, 'This is where we come in,' eh?"

Mr. Pinkin, Jr., exchanged glances with his father. "Pitiful, isn't it, Dad?" he said. "Iggerence an' lack of mental compre'nsion thrivin' in a L.C.C. modern dwellin'. It 'ud break Mr. Morrison's 'eart if 'e knoo."

"Yerse," said Mr. Pinkin, "year in an' year out, women amazes me by the stoopidity of their——"

Mr. Pinkin had gone too far. Mrs. Pinkin, suddenly awake to the fact that her sex was being made fun of, addressed a few highly-coloured remarks to Mr. Pinkin. Mr. Pinkin, deprived of his usual evening stroll, decided that he might as well use up his energy in creating a domestic disturbance. Miss Tillie Pinkin, summoning all her Reckless Impetuosity, fell upon her brother tooth and nail. Mr. Pinkin, Jr., just fell upon his sister.

Suddenly there was an urgent knocking at the door. When the Pinkin family had assumed their most touching and affectionate expressions, Mrs. Pinkin admitted the caller. It was Mr. Albert Simpole.

"Evenin', 'Orace," he said. "I jus' bin seein' about gettin' back me old job as sergeant, an' I wondered if you'd care to grope your way out with me to cellerbrate it, but judgin' from the 'ullabaloo I 'eard from outside you seem to be 'avin' a pretty gay time in 'ere already."

"We was 'avin' a discussion," Tillie said, "with the accent on the 'cuss."

"About what?" said Mr. Simpole.

"About 'ist'ry repeatin' itself," said Mr. Pinkin, Jr. "Tillie 'ere says it don't."

"Ar," said Mr. Simpole, "but it do. Take the time I was in America, when slump was jus' a word in a diction'ry. I was workin' in Bergville then, teachin' the locals 'ow to play golf. Sandy McSimpole I was then, an' I used to 'ave to say, 'Ye poot the wee ba' on the wee bit hillock, an' then ye hit it terrible fierrce.' Then I went back to me 'ut an' waited for 'em to come back for more balls. 'Owver, there was a feller out there used to make me feel reel wild. 'Is reel name was very 'ighfalutin but I alwers called 'im Cocky. Thought 'isself top-dog, bar none, 'e did, an' talked fit to blow your ear orf. On 'is own declaration 'e was a champion wrestler, champion weight-lifter, champion 'urdler, champion miler, champion ev'rythin'. Champion liar too, if you was to ask me."

"But 'e 'ad a largish fam'ly an' a bevy of pals, an' 'e kinda 'ypnotised 'em inter thinkin' 'e was as good as what 'e said 'e was. You couldn't walk a foot in Bergville wivout 'earin' someone 'oldin' forth about Cocky. It was 'My boy does this,' an' 'My boy does that,' an' 'My brother could beat So-an'-so,' an' 'My pal is better'n anyone,' until the 'ole place was so cluttered up with conceit you'd 'ave thought peacocks was bashful in comparison."

"Well, one day ole Cocky sees in the paper about a noo idea as is drorin' the crowds like free samples at the Bank of England, so 'e nacherally makes up 'is mind to 'ave a fling at it."

"Coupla days later there was a whackin' big tree-trunk shootin' up to the sky from the centre of Bergville Square. an' there was ole Cocky sittin' on top of it, playin' a cornet an' smirkin' an' wavin' in a mos' ridickalus manner. Even

'is fam'ly thought 'e was rather oversteppin' the mark but they didn't like to say anythin' in front of strangers.

"As soon as 'e saw me 'e started kickin' up a 'ell of a racket, an' the things 'e called me won't bear repeatin', not in front of people 'oo on'y knows a mere dozen or so rude words. So me an' a few pals decided as 'ow we'd put a stop to Cocky's goin's-on once an' f'rall.

"We asked 'im very perlitte if 'e'd come down. 'E said No. We asked 'im very firm if 'e'd come down. 'E said No. We said we'd even bring 'im a ladder if 'e'd climb down an' be a sensible feller. 'No,' 'e says.

"So there was on'y one thing lef' to do if we was goin' to stop ev'rybody stop doin' what they ought to 'ave bin doin' jus' to look at 'im antickin' about up there. Me an' my pals put a catch-net all round the tree-trunk an' then we jus' knocked 'im orf. See what I mean, Tillie?"

"Fraid not," Tillie said.

"Why," said Mr. Simpole, "what I done once I can ruddy well do agen. 'Ere's this other Cocky feller tryin' to show orf to all an' sundry by tryin' a spot of Pole-squattin'. Time an' agen we've asked 'im to nark it an' climb down like a sensible bloke, but it seems as 'e's not 'avin' any, so me an' the other fellers that wants to jus' get on with what we ought to be gettin' on with 'ave got to set to an' knock 'im orf. As far as I'm concerned I'm on'y too 'appy to 'elp 'ist'ry repeat itself, on'y this time it'll be rather more emphatical."

"Why?" Tillie said.

"Because," said Mr. Simpole, "I rather think me an' the other fellers won't worry to 'old a catch-net for 'im when 'e falls. Comin', 'Orace?"

"Immejit, Alb," said Mr. Pinkin.

They went.

As they groped their way down the stairway Mr. Simpole began to chuckle. "I jus' bin thinkin'," he said. "Ole Ribbontrop was right. 'E's bin sayin' all along as 'ow the democracies'll take the Siegfried Line."

"'Ere, 'ere," said Mr. Pinkin, "you got the wrong idea there, Alb."

"No," said Mr. Simpole. "'Asn't 'e bin sayin' all along that when it comes to the push the democracies'll alwers take the line of least resistance? Pore ole Ribbontrop! It mus' come as a crool blow to a feller like 'im to suddinly reelise 'e's bin tellin' the truth."

Curfew

IN those more simple days of old
The curfew, as you've doubtless read,
Rang out, when all good folk were told
"Twas time for bed.

Their wishes mattered not a pin;
The warning message clove the night
And everyone who sat within
Blew out his light,

While those whose pleasure 'twas to roam
Or revel maybe 'neath the moon
Would shake a leg and make for home,
And do it soon.

Such was the custom then. To-day
There is a town called Ripon (where
It lies precisely I can't say;
I've not been there),

And in that ancient burg, I learn,
They've kept the curfew going still,
Though as a practical concern
Its use is *nil*.

Good burghers have not dimmed their lights
On hearing that historic toot,
And those who went abroad o' nights
Cared not a hoot.

But still the horn assailed the stars,
The blower wore an old-time hat,
And sightseers ran down in cars
To gaze thereat

And paused no doubt to dine, and spent
Their bit of money in the place,
And Ripon blest them when they went
And said its grace.

To-day a darkened town lies hid;
No current strangers come to gaze;
Few revellers, if any, thrud
The unlit ways.

From early dusk no lights may shine
From Ripon windows; if they do
The owner gets a whacking fine;
Serve him right, too.

But of that ancient curfew what?
Is it as it has ever been
Hornin' a tardy hour, when not
A glint is seen?

Have they suspended, even sacked,
The blower with his old-time tile,
Thinking, which seems to be the fact,
He's not worth while?

Or do they—wiselier, no doubt—
Employ him hat and horn to blow
At earlier dusk "Black-out!" "Black-out!"?
Darned if I know. DUM-DUM.



"I expect this war-tension affects everyone in some way or other, don't you, Mr. Lake?"

On the Water Front

"STAND by to let go," we said strongly, as usual. Nothing happened. No one, as the French High Command would say, "reacted." Far off in the bows (well, thirty-six feet away) stood our gallant Mate, as usual; but he gave no sign of understanding or respect. He did not even turn his head.

We cried again: "Stand by to let go the anchor!" Our gallant Mate still stood irresponsive, apparently surveying his reflection in the water.

Another member of the crew (whom we will call B, to please the censor) stood half-way along the ship. "Tell him," we said curtly, "to stand by to let go."

B was looking in our direction. He continued to look in our direction. He did nothing else.

"Good Heavens! Mutiny!" we thought. "On the sixth day of the war!"

Then light came upon us. Of course, the crew could not hear a word we said. Indeed, at that range, they did not know that we were uttering at all. For we were doing our first exercises in our full war-paint—Battle Bowler, Fume Face, Sanitary Suit and all (we use these terms so that the enemy may not guess what precautions we have taken against pharmaceutical attack). And well might our gallant Mate survey his reflection in the water. From head to foot he was swathed in ——— coloured ———. His trousers—we beg your pardon; we are so sorry—his lower protective elements were tucked into ———boots. Above the sanitary suit one saw, like an elderly and somewhat unpleasant ram, the fume face; and above that again, the battle bowler. He looked like nothing on earth. Or rather, he looked like a member of the ——— Service, ready, not merely for action, but for a prolonged stay in the infernal regions.

It felt like the infernal regions. It was the hottest day in that fantastic and magical first week of September. No one who did not spend half an hour in a sanitary suit that day, starting engines, getting up anchors, signalling, clambering about lighters and so forth, has the faintest conception of the meaning of the word "sweat." Indeed, it seemed to us extremely healthy—for it was, as it were, a Turkish bath combined with exercise, and Turkish baths are usually associated with inaction and recumbence.

And, by the way (supposing that

the enemy are listening), let the enemy not suppose that they are going to upset us by making us put on our sanitary suits and things. They look alarming; at lectures about them they sound intolerable. But, as some original thinker has said, one can get used to almost anything. At all events, our crew are now accustomed to raising and dropping anchors, making fast to lighters and clambering about them in the dark, conversing, starting engines, etc., in this strange costume. The day may come when we shall feel naked and under-dressed without a fume face and battle bowler. True, none of us has tried swimming in these clothes, but even that may come. We do not recall, by the way, that in the admirable course of lectures we attended, anyone explained to us the correct method of swimming in a tin-hat, respirator, sanitary suit and sea-boots in winter-time in the River ———. This should be thought out.

Odd, by the way what simple things may be missed by the greatest minds, the most artful plan. In all the tremendous blackery preparations, all the relentless persuasion of the citizen to shroud his house, nobody seems to have observed that the King's telephone call-boxes ought to be shrouded too, for the simple reason that YOU CANNOT DIAL IN THE DARK, and the

temptation to use a torch in these little glass-houses is irresistible. One official answer, we believe, is "But what is one to do in the day-time?" To which we answer, "Hold the door open." One prompt and efficient official did have a box blacked out for us, we proudly record: and we assure him that, by day, one foot, or elbow, in the doorway makes all things easy.

Again, no lecturer or gossip had revealed the truth that burst upon us now, as we gazed at the irresponsive ram-faces before us. *You cannot shout in a fume face. You cannot vociferate in a respirator.* The citizen tottering into his g—mask for the first time has a feeling that he will be blind and deaf in the thing. He is not: but he is pretty dumb. Moreover, if he goes too close to a chap and shouts in his ear he is quite likely to cut his cheek open with his battle bowler.

Well, what did we do? Were we nonplussed? No. Many months ago we started learning our semaphore again. We said that others ought to do the same. *The Daily* ——— told us "There will be no war." Others said that if there was a war there would be no semaphore. There would be the telephone and the wireless. They said we were wasting our time, fussing without cause, and becoming a nuisance. We persisted. Moreover we instructed our gallant Mate in the art. And now the big reward arrived. We waggled our arms at the Mate. The Mate put his head on one side and looked like a mountain-clk meditating a charge or the High Priest of the Bala-Bala beginning a human sacrifice. But he understood: and he responded. There is not going to be a superfluity of fun in the current war; but two men semaphoring to each other at short range in their chemical war-kit, believe us, is a spectacle not without a certain sombre merriment.

At all events, it was effective: and again we commend the study of semaphore to our countrymen, however civilian; for one day any man may find himself in the same—well, no, a similar boat.

No doubt some will say again that we are fussing unnecessarily. They said that this time last year when we built a dug-out in the garden. Some said it this year when we had a basement strutted. But now the neighbours are happy to pop in and out of both. A. P. H.



"The Equator is a Maginot line running round the world."

THE CHANGING FACE OF BRITAIN

VI.—THE CLUB



1



2

"No Quarrel"

"WE have no quarrel with the German nation"—
One would not quarrel with the trustful
sheep:

But generation after generation
They cough up rulers who disturb our sleep.

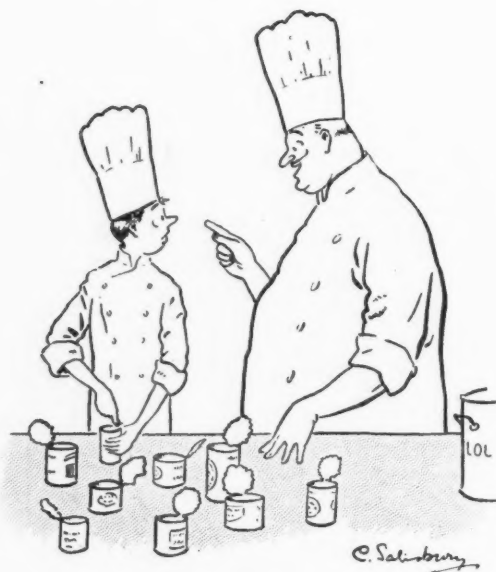
"We have no quarrel with the German nation."
They're fond of music, poetry, and beer:
But, all the same, with tiresome iteration
They choose a fool to govern them—and cheer.

"We have no quarrel with the German nation";
But no one else upsets the common pot.
They are the cause of every conflagration—
Is it a mere coincidence, or what?

We had no quarrel with the German nation
When Wilhelm was the madman off the chain;
We helped along their rehabilitation—
And now, my hat, they do it all again!

"We have no quarrel with the German nation";
And Wagner's works are very good indeed:
But if they *must* repeat this aberration
It might be better if they did not breed.

"We have no quarrel with the German nation";
In their affairs of course we have no say:
But it would seem some major operation
(On head and heart) may be the only way. A. P. H.



"Excellent! To-morrow you may boil an egg."

The Angevins, the Plantagenets and Ourselves

III

THE Angevins and ourselves have further celebrated our friendship. (The Plantagenets have remained, naturally, in their tombs.)

Miss Pin and I, unlike the Angevins and ourselves, *avons eu des mots*.

She says that I am obviously tired out.

Not in the least, I reply. *She*, on the other hand, has evidently been doing too much.

It is, therefore, folly to talk of going to call on the friends of her friends in the town between the expedition to Azay-le-Rideau and the banquet by torchlight that is to close the celebrations. We discuss the point in the hall of the hotel, which contains two wicker chairs, a wicker sofa, five pot-plants, ten framed looking-glasses and a bureau behind which a new and hitherto unseen member of the *patron's* family appears every few hours.

King—*le bon petit boule*—lies on the steps. Nearly everybody coming in or going out steps over him and says, "*Ah, le joli chien!*"

A young woman swathed to the chin in crape, with a black veil flowing to her heels—probably in complimentary mourning for the cousin of her brother-in-law's aunt—walks up to the bureau and asks to see the menu.

"Soup. What is this soup?" she suspiciously inquires.

It is described to her in detail.

"And the fish. It will be good?"

"Excellent. With a cream sauce."

"Ah! Cutlets—no, they say nothing to me. What vegetables?"

"Tomatoes, green peas, and fried potatoes."

"No beans?"

"Alas, no!"

"No beans. That is extraordinary," says the client disgustedly.

She inquires minutely into the nature of the cheese and the fruit, but evidently as a mere matter of academic interest.

Madame, her head bowed in shame at the lack of beans, answers very sadly.

Then the lady in mourning puts down the menu, says "*Non*," shaking her head, and walks away. She only turns round once to call over her shoulder:

"No chicken, for instance?"

"Unhappily, not to-day."

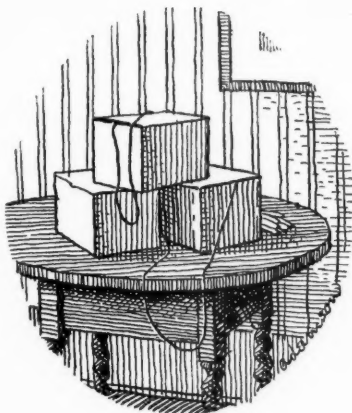
"Ah! And no beans?" screams the client, stepping over King. ("*Ah, le bon petit chien!*")

"Tomatoes, green peas, fried potatoes, and possibly one could find some spinach. But beans—impossible."

The client, shaking her head and muttering, disappears. Miss Pin and I look at one another.

I see that she is just about to begin talking of the friends she wishes to visit, and in order to forestall her I suddenly find myself saying—without much originality—"Ah, *le bon petit King!*"

It is of no avail. Miss Pin and I presently set out and, after twice losing the way, find ourselves received by Madame Derlys, *mon fils en permission*, *l'oncle Henri*, *la petite Jacqueline*, and *notre ami Monsieur Lagrue*. We all sit round in a circle and ask after all one another's friends and relations, known and unknown, and exchange compliments about our respective countries. Monsieur Lagrue introduces a reference to *ce fou d'Ilère*, at which everyone



"Ha—visitors!"

exclaims, "Ah, 'Ilère!" and someone adds: "Et Mussolini, par exemple!" and we all say "Ah!" again, and politics are dismissed. Suddenly Miss Pin in a very French manner screams, "Ah! we shall be late!" and everybody gets up and shakes everybody else by the hand, and Miss Pin and I depart.

Drama awaits us at the hotel where King—*le petit Kiki*—is no longer to be found.

"Il est sorti, le malheureux!"

King has seen fit to go—without, says Madame, crying warning—for a walk.

He has not come back.

He is so valuable, he will have been stolen.

He is so friendly, he would accompany a robber to his den.

He is so gay, he would fling himself under a car.

The cousin of Madame's husband is getting out an automobile in order to go and search the town.

Miss Pin and I ejaculate suitably, but are obliged to depart for Azay-le-Rideau still in suspense as to the fate of King.

Le Lord Mayor and la Lady Mayoress have had to leave us, but *le Shérife* remains, and three young Marocains and two Angevins inquire of me what is a *Shérife*.

I am still unable to tell them.

The excursion, as usual, undergoes expansion and is made to include two extra *châteaux*, *une ravissante petite église*, and a view from the top of a hill which is too steep for the auto-cars. (It is too steep for us as well, but we climb it all the same.)

A large painting of Diane de Poitiers—taken in a garden on what one hopes was the hottest day of the year, and surrounded by leaping hounds—causes Miss Pin to refer to *le bon petit boule*, and I have a practically similar reaction to the sight of a yellow-and-white mongrel at the foot of the five hundred and eighty-nine steps that we are required to go first up, and then down, at the last *château*.

A couple of *britanniques* tiresomely cause themselves to be waited for while they choose, write, stamp and post a number of picture postcards, and there is every prospect of our all getting in late and having insufficient time to dress for the banquet.

Just as Miss Pin and I spring up the steps of the hotel I

trip, exclaim automatically, "Ah, *le bon petit King!*" and perceive the wanderer returned.

"Ah!"

"Ah," echoes Madame, and she tells us that Kiki was so intelligent as to go to the public gardens and take his walk there in safety until retrieved by one of the searchers. Miss Pin and I are both late for the banquet as a result, but so is everybody else, and the banquet itself is not ready until nearly two hours after the advertised time.

Everybody drinks *vins d'Anjou* and *le Shérife* makes a speech and my French neighbour says: Could I tell him what, exactly—and I pretend not to hear and distract his attention by suddenly drinking his health. The Angevins burst into "O! *l'anglaise*," which they sing rather in the manner of a military march, and I hear myself and several of my fellow-*britanniques* inviting a number of Angevins to come and stay with us in England.

The Plantagenets have done their work. The friendship of *les Angevins* and *les britanniques* has been cemented.

I say all this, and much else, to Miss Pin on the boat.

Miss Pin replies: "Ah!"

E. M. D.

o o

"In an emergency much may be done with soups."

The Times.

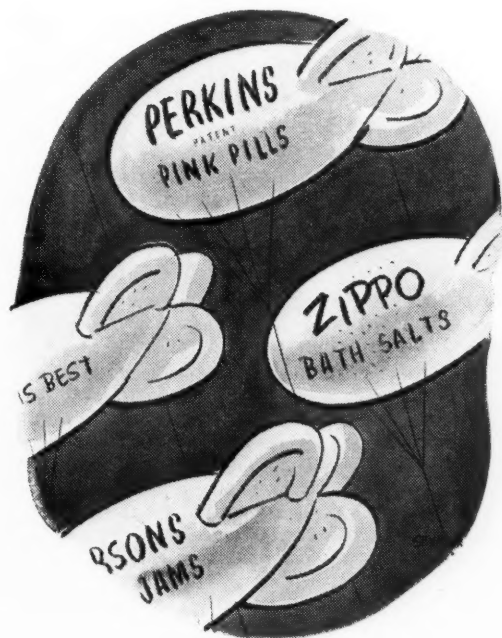
Ask any waiter.

o o

"He [Hitler] would prefer to wear leather trousers. . . ."

Daily Sketch.

Somebody been goose-stepping right behind him?



The business of the country must go on!



POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS—FISH

Not At the Pictures

NOT in London, anyway; not at the moment. As I write, there is some talk of a deputation, and I wish it luck. I'm already annoyed enough that I've been done out of seeing Ginger Rogers in her new picture; the idea that I may have to wait months and then travel in a darkened train to Aberystwyth or somewhere before I get a chance to see it is very damaging to my morale.

Not, I admit, that seeing films is an absolute necessity of life. For instance the people in the pub I visited last night were managing fairly well without any cinemas. They were, one might say, making their own films. True, they weren't exactly trying to make a *new* film, but where could one ever find a producer who was?

It appeared that the fatter of the two men who were occupying the only two leather-seated chairs in the saloon bar happened to have seen a mystery film on the very last Saturday night before the London cinemas were shut. He was outlining the story, and he would have found the job very much easier if the man in the other leather-seated chair hadn't seen the same picture a month or two earlier.

Things would have been less difficult also if people

hadn't kept groping their way in past the black-out curtain over the entrance and asking whether anybody had seen Peggy lately, or how Joe was. But at least we got a few pictures; not easy perhaps to interpret, but vivid. The narrator had a certain visual imagination.

"There was this detective up in one corner," he said, "and there was this other reporter down here in the other without his coat. And the flowers growing in between. And that dog was a scream, that dog was."

"Cor, yes, that dog was a proper scream," said the other man. "When he ate the candle!"

"I don't mean when he ate the candle," the first man objected. "You always get a lot of that species of incident. I mean the remarkable intelligence that dog showed."

"Almost human some dogs are, I always say," said a lady with what looked like a piece of dried cuttlefish on her hat.

The first man said sternly, "The murder wouldn't have been discovered but for that dog."

"Yes it would," said the second man. "Don't forget where they broke into the shop in the last ten minutes."



"Germans, dear?"

A Soldier

THERE was a man was son and lover,
And he went soldiering the world over . . .
O soldier, why so far?
Lovely and fair the home-fields are.

Little he knew of home and loving;
Gone as far as the wind's roving;
Unkindly tasks were his,
Shorter and sharper than a kiss.

Did he dream? Was he ever wondering?
Silent he in the guns' thundering:
Oh, never a wild bird flew
More covetous of the things it knew;

Never a wave gave closer cover
To pearl and gold it pondered over
Than this man in his thought
Gave to his secret while he fought.

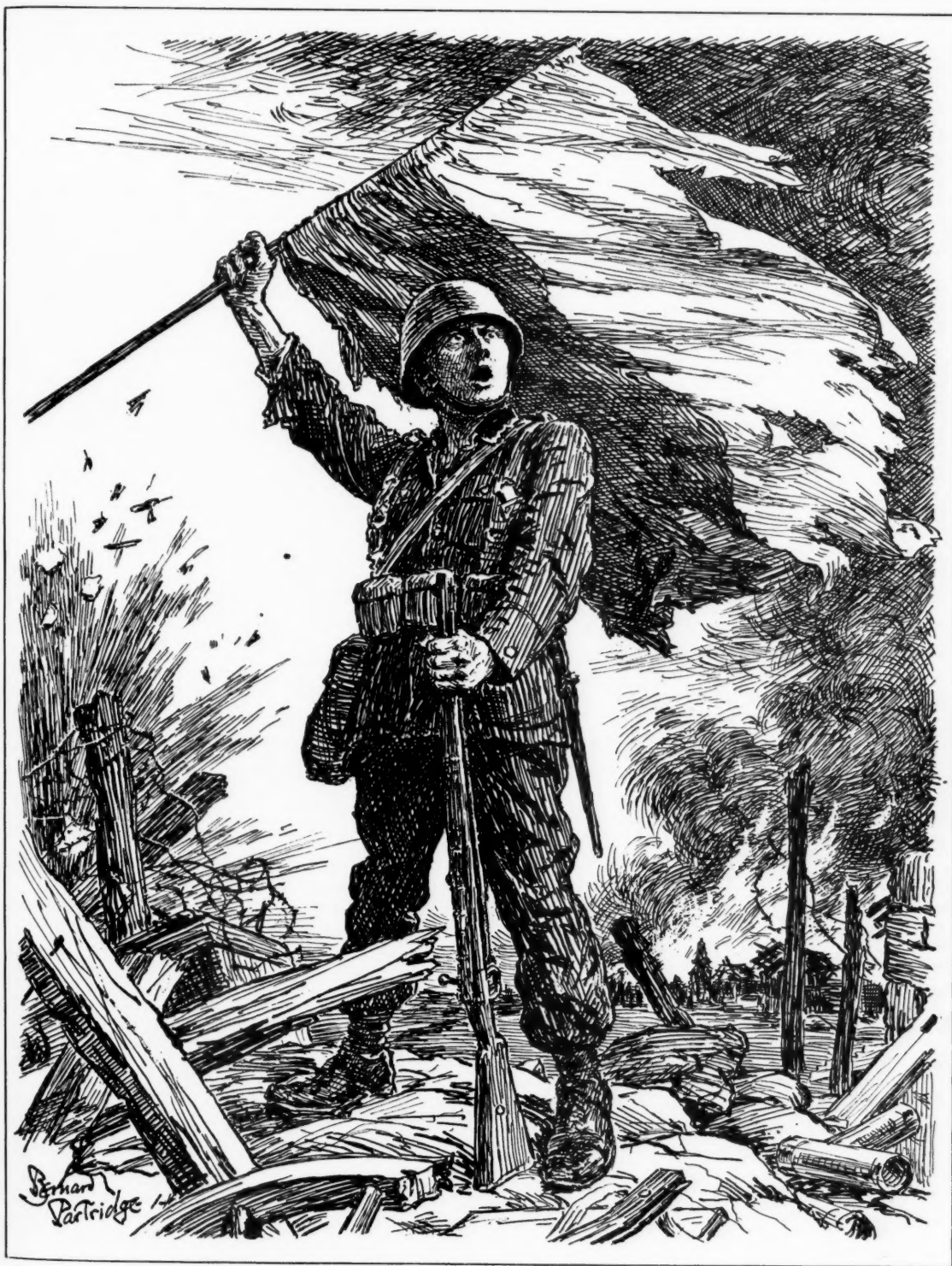
O soldier, why this reckless giving,
As love were naught and the joys of living?
Aye, life he gave as well,
Falling, and silent where he fell.

* * * * *

There was a man was son and lover
And he went soldiering the world over
Nor ever came again,
Nor with the plough, nor with the grain.

In his lone bed out far, far yonder,
Did he ever dream, did he re-ponder
The lore of field and streams,
Fighting to save them in his dreams?

Oh, he went soldiering to his own knowing,
Like the rain's falling, like the wind's blowing,
Like the sunlight in the sky . . .
Lovely and fair the home-fields lie.



SALUTE TO THE BRAVE

Impressions of Parliament

Wednesday, September 13th.—HITLER, whose declaration that he had no desire to make war on women and children has proved as worthless as all his other statements, and who has now like a spoilt child threatened the Poles with organised terrorism for the crime of resisting his will, got a straight warning this afternoon in the Lords. The question of civilians being bombed was raised by Lord MOTTISTONE, and Lord HALIFAX replied that while the British and French Governments had expressed their desire to protect civilians so far as possible, they held themselves free to take any action if similar restraint was not observed on the other side. Loud cheers left no doubt of the approval of the House.

Among the bits of information which filtered through to the Commons at Question-time were Mr. CHAMBERLAIN's announcement that a Ministry of Shipping would soon be established, Mr. BURGIN's that all munitions factories were working at full capacity and were being added to, and Major TRYON's that when things had settled down he hoped that a letter posted before 5.30 P.M. in London would reach any part of England or Wales the next morning.

The debate, like one's last pair of spectacles, fell into two parts—a fairly comprehensive survey of the situation by the P.M., and general though kindly criticism of the way in which the infant Ministry of Information had made its opening moves.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN told the House how much he had been pleased at the first meeting yesterday in Paris of the Supreme War Council by the absolute unanimity of opinion between the French and ourselves. He spoke warmly of the loyal reaction of the Dominions, and of the magnificent spirit being shown by the Polish people; and he went on to describe how the three branches of our Services were

busily making their preliminary contacts with the enemy. The convoy system was about to begin, and there had already been successes against U-boats; black-outs were to be slightly relaxed; evacuation had been completed, not without raising its own social problems; and hospital facilities were being still further extended. Finally, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN apologised to the Press for the early

sanctioned, but also of the poor quality of our news service to Dominion and neutral countries, some of the latter, he declared, having already turned in desperation to German sources.

Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR agreed, emphasising the duty of the Ministry to enlighten as well as to suppress. "The Press," he said, "should be given every opportunity of filling up the gap of ignorance which is growing between the public and the Government."

In reply Sir SAMUEL HOARE was honest with the House. He admitted the mistakes which had been made, but pleaded quite reasonably that the strain on the new organisation had been immense. In the immediate future, he prophesied, decided improvement would be shown; and as an instance of the way in which the news service to neutral countries was being expanded he cited the loosening of the censorship so as to allow reputable foreign correspondents to use the Continental telephone. There would be no more raids on newspaper offices, he assured Mr. BEVERLEY BAXTER, who described the action on Monday night as savouring too much of the Gestapo.

Brass-hats, Captain CAZALET complained, were already getting control, and though it was necessary for them to have a certain amount it must not be forgotten that in a new sense this was a people's war, and the people should be trusted.

Brass-hats were the trouble, not a doubt of it, growled that old campaigner, Colonel WEDGWOOD.



THE LIGHT OF CRITICISM

[“Persons using torches must take the utmost care to prevent the light from being directed on to the driver of a vehicle.”
Black-Out Regulations.]

MR. GREENWOOD AND SIR SAMUEL HOARE

errors of the Ministry of Information. The aim of this Department, he said, must be “to steer between giving information which might help the enemy to defeat and destroy our own troops and withholding information with the risk of creating an impression that terrible things may be happening of which the public has no knowledge.”

Mr. GREENWOOD, convinced of the P.M.'s sincerity, yet took a grave view not only of the major incident of the week, in which police had raided newspapers on Monday night to suppress news of the B.E.F. in France which had already been officially passed out and which later in the night was once more

News from the North

“DECLARATION OF WAR
CREATED PROFOUND IMPRESSION IN
WORKINGTON”
Headings in Local Paper.



"My dear, I'm like the stork—when danger threatens I just bury my head in the sand!"

Gossip

THE Secretary of the Brighter Clothes for Men Movement tells me that the war has given his organisation a great fillip. After an air-raid warning in a South Coast hotel, a retired bank manager appeared in green pyjamas, a tin-helmet and brown shoes of two distinct patterns. A well-known North London masonry contractor surprised his fellow-guests at Lord Gant's country seat by appearing during an air-raid wearing

only the flag of Jugo-Slavia and a bowler-hat.

* * *

I met a friend yesterday who is just back from Warsaw. For obvious reasons I cannot mention his name, since he is attached semi-officially to our Embassy there. Nor of course can I divulge the many startling items of information which he gave me, though if I dared to do so they would

interest my readers immensely. I may perhaps, however, be permitted to divulge one significant fact: *Hitler's popularity in the Polish capital is on the wane.*

* * *

It is an open secret that although the Government's Emergency Preparations have on the whole been adequate, the nation is threatened, if the war lasts more than thirty-five years, with a severe shortage of shoe-laces. I interviewed the leading manufacturer of these useful articles to-day, and though he spoke manfully, I could see that tears were not far from his eyes, overhung as they were with the bushy brows that he had inherited from generations of law-abiding square-dealing shoe-lace makers. "We have got plenty of the tin bits that go on at the end," he said, "but nothing to join them together with." I hear that in Government circles the snapping of the shoe-lace agreements is causing grave concern. "We could of course import them from Persia," as a junior Minister told me at the Athenaeum last night, "but what would Japan say?"

* * *

Talking of Japan reminds me that George Gubbins is home again after spending the last five years at the Hotel Smokio in Tokio. Gubbins originally went to Tokio as Special Correspondent of the *Aquarium Gazette*, but when that excellent journal went under he could not tear himself away from the fragrance of the East, fortunately for Britain. The popular idea that it was the Nazi-Soviet Pact that detached Japan from the Axis is completely wrong. It was Gubbins. Some day the full story will be told, but at the moment it must suffice if I reveal that had the late Prime Minister of Japan been one whit less keen on goldfish events in Europe would now be taking a very different turn.

* * *

I saw a new gas-mask case in Oxford Street to-day, made of crushed moiré silk with a soupçon of beige catafalque, embroidered with a portrait of Ribbentrop and a quotation from *The Merchant of Venice*. At eighteen guineas, including the real cowhide strap, it should be a popular model.

* * *

Professor Ernest Sanguine of Birmingham has perfected a new type of sandbag which does not require to be filled with sand. He hopes after further research to dispense also with the bag.

The Neo-Refugees

WE do not consider that we live in a suburb; in fact it is a term that we rather resent. We like to think that we are primarily Londoners, but living in a small self-contained corner, or coign, with some of the better characteristics of an English village. We profess ignorance of the actual Metropolitan Borough that spends our rates, and of course we would never dream of voting at a council election. We deal at a local shop (for those things we have forgotten to order from the stores where we have our accounts) and we invariably buy our home-made cakes, drink our morning coffee and recount the latest rumours at a charming olde worlde shoppe in the High Street. (Yes, we have a High Street still, although the L.C.C. have officially taken it away.)

We are, however, acutely aware that we are in an evacuation area and that we have an air-raid warden—possibly two; we hate literal accuracy.

And we are feeling rather differently about it all compared with last September.

Then it was rather a joke. Mr. Bellows, our bank manager, was air-raid warden and he was inclined to be apologetic about it. After all, he does not deal in overdrafts at his branch, and nothing destroys a bank manager's morale more quickly than a lack of overdrafts. Then we listened rather incredulously to the talk of war and somehow knew that it would be put right in the end. After all, we weren't expecting anything of that kind and no one could really be expected to fight on such short notice. Mr. Talkinghorn, our stockbroker, said that he went to bed for the week and read no newspapers at all, and save for Mr. Pidgeon, who is a school-master and prone to talk on Central European history, we all secretly thought that Mr. Talkinghorn's attitude was the right one.

But this year! All is changed. We are ready, absolutely ready for anything which happens.

Mr. Bellows has left us for a prosperous seaside resort, and our warden is now Mr. Crucis, who is something very wholesale in one of the larger but Aryan sections of East London. He likes gas-masks, he likes them in quantities; almost he seems to think that we ought each to have a few spares (if he were selling them I'm sure we would) and that if we can only have one each, then it must be a perfect fit.

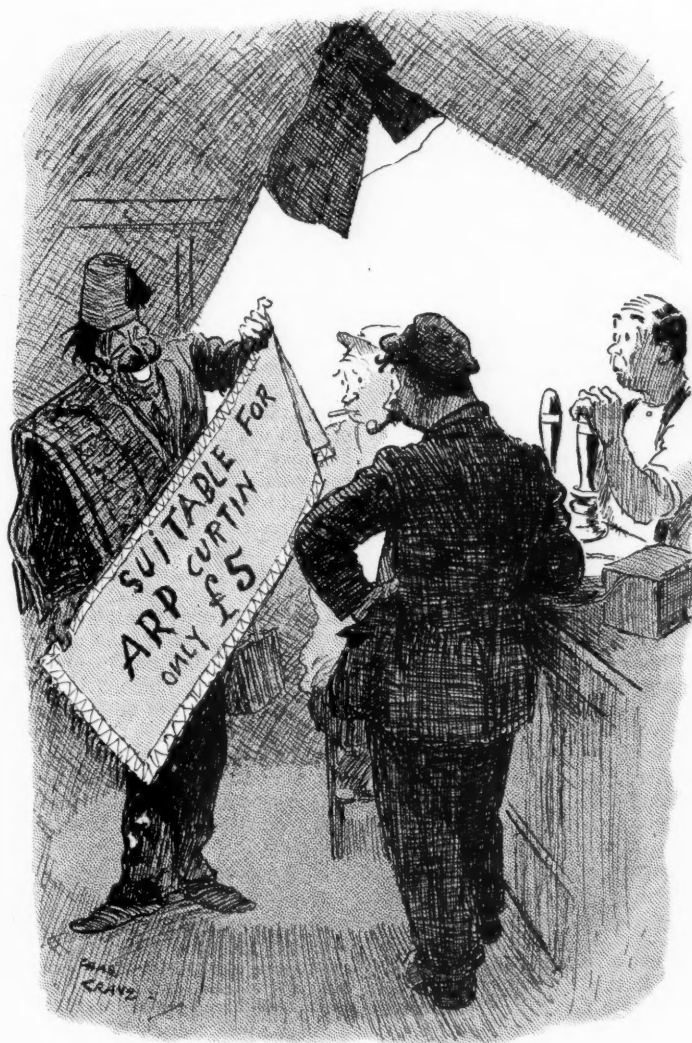
The result is that we are all very gas-mask-conscious.

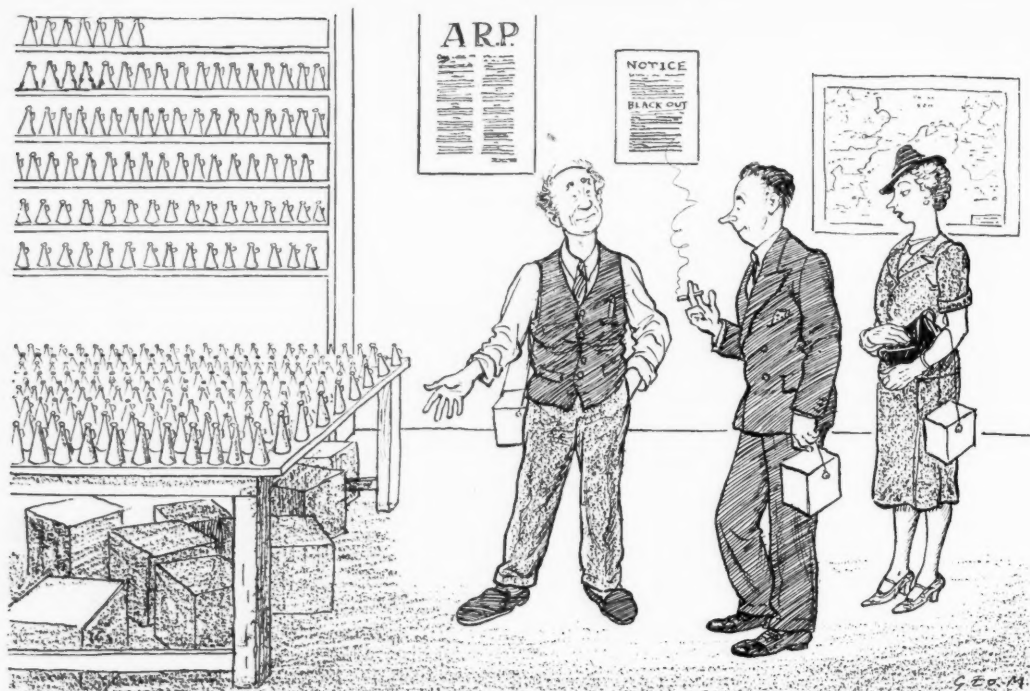
Then there is the question of shelters, and that is wrapped up in the question of evacuation, and that again is a problem which has rather split us. Does one evacuate oneself or not?

It is easy for those with children. As Mrs. Fitzjohn said, "We must think of posterity," and of course there is no answer to that. Thinking of posterity, Mrs. Fitzjohn has secured a largish house in a remote Welsh valley, and although her children will immediately leave her to go back to school, one to Malvern and the other to Taunton, each almost as safe as the remote Welsh valley, Mrs. Fitzjohn will be

able to think of posterity all alone (save for a cook and a parlour-maid), whilst her chauffeur, his wife and their two children will sit and think of posterity in the otherwise deserted Fitzjohn London house.

Mrs. Carmichael, on the other hand, is in rather a quandary. Her sole interest in posterity (a daughter) married in June and left with her new husband for South America shortly afterwards. Mr. Carmichael is believed to deal with tea in considerable quantities, and he, poor man, is apparently retained to look after the tea while there is anyone left in or near London capable of drinking it. Mrs. Carmichael nearly fell—her sister in





"My own little voluntary work for A. R. P. — extinguishers for glow-worms."

the Isle of Wight developed an obscure complaint that apparently needed unprofessional nursing — but Mrs. Wilkinson-Wilkinson (whose husband is very near the top of Scotland Yard) said that in her view a wife's place was at her husband's side in times of danger, and that is an argument (or assertion) that any British matron finds it hard to refute. After the decision was reached the Carmichaels acquired one of the most sumptuous air-raid shelters ever seen outside an illustrated catalogue and Mr. Carmichael was apparently prepared to sacrifice his rose-garden to get it.

The result is that our locality (for I can think of no better term) is rather divided. The posterity-regarders have all gone, with the exception of young Mrs. Treherne, who flatly says in a rather rough way that you cannot dodge the bomb with your name on it. A number of those without posterity have departed, mostly very quietly, before breakfast and with an absence of farewells. The Wilkinson-Wilkinsons and the Carmichaels and their school have formed an uneasy pact of non-aggression (I think Herr von Ribbentrop must have met Mrs. Carmichael when he was in London) and, with an entire absence of boastfulness, do

manage to disclose their plans, their reasons and their reactions whenever they meet one.

The odd thing is that Mr. Talking-horn is the only one who has the best of both worlds. After last September he went back to the battery he had commanded during the last war, and since this had been converted into an anti-aircraft unit he was soon given command of a freshly-formed battery. He found to his sardonic joy that his war station was a small open space three minutes away from his own house, so he has billeted himself on himself and comes back from his war each night to sleep at home. As his wife drives an ambulance he has acquired two female members of the Auxiliary Territorials as servants and orderlies, and the house, he declares, is better run now than ever it has been.

It's an ill war that blows nobody any good.

o o

"Modern Europe contains htoerapitrsse.
Modern Europe contains other parties—
and Italy is chief among them—who have
problems to solve, and Italy at the right
moment will have her word to say."

Dundee Paper.

Not that one again, please.

Little Adolf

(To pave the way modestly for what is bound to crop up pretty soon.)

NOW at last I am in a position to reveal the extraordinary story of my early associations with that unhappy man, Adolf Hitler. They are likely to be historical, for not only did we as children go hand-in-hand every morning to the village school at Oberspöschstein-und-Winkel, but I was with him during his early struggles in the rat-bane plant at Bogelsdorf, during his long and weary seclusion in Bad Piesporter Goldtropfchen prison, during the ill-fated Apfeldümlin brawl in the coal-cellar at Spitz, and later on various occasions since his remarkable rise to power. The last time I saw him was two years ago, when we split a bottle of soda-water together in his back-porch at Berchtesgaden and let our minds wander back to our careless boyhood days, recalling the many rough pranks we had played upon the burgomaster. We had small privacy, owing to the constant intrusion of big men in uniform who seemed angry about something, but as Adolf sipped his soda-water he grew particularly amused at the

thought of how he had frightened the burgomaster into an epileptic fit by jumping on him from a cupboard dressed as a sheep.

It is to those early days that I look back with most interest, for in the child Adolf was all of the later man who was to put Europe to the terrible arbitrament of war. Not that he was then called either Adolf or Hitler, but plain Moses Lebenstein, a name passed down to him by many generations of good Jewish ancestors. In the village his paternity was known beyond dispute, though a trifle irregular; it was this irregularity which made his later change of name a good deal easier.

When I knew him first not only was his name Moses, but nasally he was fully representative of his line. An accident to his aunt's larder-window, through which he was endeavouring to climb, reduced the organ to normal proportions and facilitated his change of race. But that came later, after a long string of defeats at the hands of his co-religionists both in the class-room and the playground had engendered in him a bitter fury.

There is no use in pretending that Adolf was in any sense a popular boy at Obersploschstein school. The fact that we called him Pieface was probably due in the main to his having, at the age of seven, no moustache, but it also sprang from a certain round emptiness which distinguished him until the growth of his first beard helped to fill it in. His habits of kicking

without warning at the nearest shin, of throwing heavy stones from behind hedges at complete strangers, and of placing an open jack-knife on the benches of any who worsted him in argument were not endearing, and even worse—for in the remote country-side crude horseplay is common enough—was the way in which he stood apart from our common life. While we others showed our skill at leapfrog and marbles he used to sit brooding sullenly over the future, alone in a corner of the playground, chewing his fingers—for he was carnivorous then—and giving frequent vent to little high-pitched snorts. When I got to know him better—and I was the only one who did—I realised that these snorts were nothing less than milestones marking the long path of ruthless ambition which this extraordinary child was busily laying ahead of him.

Two snatches of conversation at that time were starkly significant in the light of after events. In each case we were sitting together at the bottom of the Bible Class.

"Moses, why do you go out of your way to make the other chaps hate you?" I asked him. He paused a moment sullenly before replying.

"One day they will dance to my whip," he muttered in a voice shaken with rage, as he jabbed his nib savagely into Leviticus.

In the second case he opened with the remark, curious from the mouth of a child dressed in a blue-print frock,

that there was no curse so heavy as to be born superlatively great.

"You seem very sure, Moses, that you are," I said banteringly.

He pointed gravely to the back of his head and then to his solar plexus.

"I feel it here and here," he told me. "High destiny has marked me down. The stars will guide me to great peaks and great sorrows." As he spoke tears welled up in his large protuberant eyes.

I remember thinking it was more likely indigestion from which he was suffering, but how wrong I was! For one thing he had a digestion of steel. He was prepared to eat anything, and did. Jam was his passion, and he ate it in quarts. I have often seen him returning from an afternoon's brooding with no fewer than seven different kinds on his face and the backs of his hands. In fact, looking back, he was the stickiest child I can ever remember.

Only once did he ever lower the mask which had become part of him, and that was to me. I found him, a hunched, fat, sticky little figure, sobbing under his desk in the twilight.

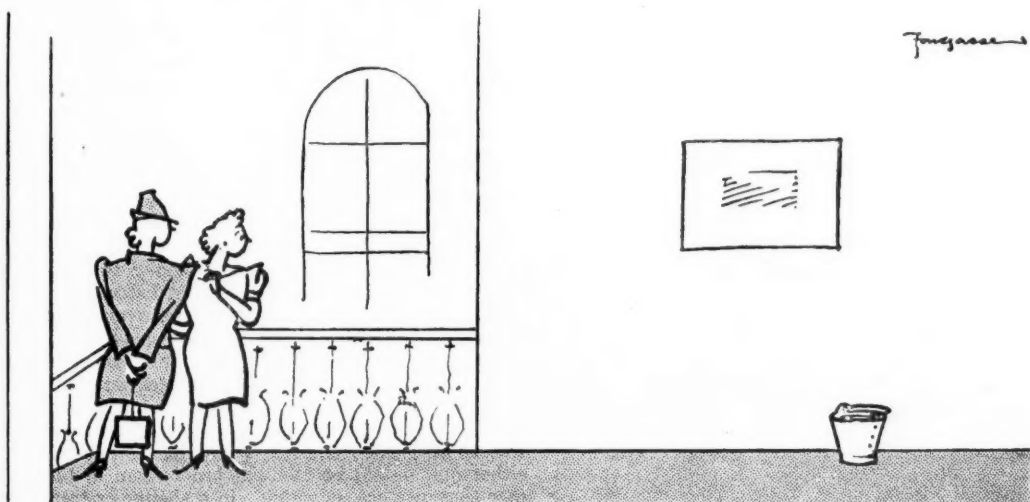
"What is it, Moses?" I inquired kindly. His answer took me aback.

"I am lonely," he said. "I love Gretel, but she will not speak to me."

"You hit her father on the head with a stone last Friday," I reminded him.

"I have just hit her on the head with a brick," he said.

That was the sort of difficult boy he was. ERIC.



"Yes, that's for incendiary bombs—though I still don't see why they aren't just as likely not to fall into it."

Tripartite A.R.P.

"WELL, I don't know, I'm sure," said Mrs. Prosser. Nor did I—and though I had mislaid my gas-mask I doubted whether my landlady's words bore any reference to that calamity. Nor were they very helpful if they did.

"In three places at once," she continued, "I cannot be, nor any of God's creatures, come to that. The large tear in your upper sheet you will find repaired to-night, but give you a clean one I cannot. The laundry is at best of times depilatory, but now that half its vans are ambulances standing Ready, Ay Ready, as father used to say, against the worst, and the other half heading for rank ruin and the scrap-heap the way those boys drive—really, when I heard of the Militia I thought that would take them and give us peace in our road, but it seems that one is a conscientious objector and the other a gastric stomach—when we will get any washing at all I do not know."

That was all very well, but it did not help me to find my gas-mask and, thus officially protected, go to my work. I ventured upon the direct question.

"There!" exclaimed Mrs. Prosser in reply—purely as an ejaculation and not indicative of place and therefore useless to me. "That's just what I was saying: that's the *third* thing. And as I say, how?"

Rapidly I reviewed my possessions. If losses reputedly go in threes, what else had I mislaid? As far as I could tell, nothing. I made for the door, but like Horatius, Mrs. Prosser barred my way, complicated by an entanglement of a larger acreage of sheet than I had hitherto suspected my bed to be capable of carrying. Evidently fate had decreed that I was to be late for work.

"And as for Tibbles," pursued my landlady, "having a cat that colour makes of the black-out confusion more confounded in the house at least, besides which he himself is liable to suffer injury, and that is not a thing they have provided for, I understand, in war risks, either to self or cat. But what is one to do?"

I was about to suggest that the premium expected of

Tibbles was not likely to be high, but Mrs. Prosser stayed not for an answer, while she made complicated passes with the sheet which successfully blocked the entire doorway.

"At first it was gas," she said. "You know—seal up every crack and you will be all right. This was one of a set which all have worn disgracefully. They should not ought to be allowed to sell such infective goods; and after doing all those curtains and all. However, it never rains but it showers. Well, as I say, I do not know what one can do unless one bisects oneself into three. I mean, how can one?"

This proposition was too much for me. I shook my head dumbly. All I wanted to know myself was what had happened to my gas-mask, but Mrs. Prosser ploughed relentlessly on.

"Of course we might of taken earlier steps, but after all, look at last September, and then look at this!"

I had looked at it since it began, and did not much like it. For once I felt safe in agreeing with Mrs. Prosser.

"Of course," she went on, "no one thought anything but what it would all come to naught, but we are all foolish virgins at heart. Anyhow, *then* they said: 'Get out of your house and into your shelter,' which we haven't got, though I dare say we could have had we thought sooner, and now it may well be over by the time it is delivered, and in any case where is my washing to be hung if we put it in the yard when Prosser will not move those pigeons one single inch from where they are? To my mind, the pigeons get more sun than what they can do with, shut in as they are, and not loose to fly as when Nature has her way. I said to Prosser, I said, 'I do not see,' I said, 'how one who says he is a bird-lover can so converse the natural manner of a bird as to keep it in a cage,' I said. But he has won so many prizes with those pigeons that my washing must be content with what it can get."

"Well, he won't be able to win any more now that the Government is restricting the movements of pigeons," I reminded her.

She brightened visibly.

"Well, that's a fact," she said. "But all the same that doesn't alter the question, which is, How do you know what they are going to use? Even Mr. Purkis the warden cannot tell us that: it seems they do not say, and though one can believe anything of that Hitler, I take it they are more inconsiderate than what one thought for. One might expect them to show a coloured flag or something in advance and so save us all that running about. No more rations will one get for so much perinambulation either, and it should be a time to conserve energy, not waste it, though now I see why they have been making all this fuss about physical fitness and that, paying people money to do it and all. Wasteful, it seemed at one time, but I dare say they know what they are doing. All the same, over the other I do think they might have been a little more adhesive."

This was beyond me, but to seek for explanation would be vain. Mrs. Prosser continued unchecked:

"Well, you know how it is: you hear the syringe, and run. Into the shelter if you have one, into the cellar if not. But those garden shelters, I take it, are not gas-proof, so either one should be in a gas-proof room in the house in case they use gas, or outside in a shelter or trench in case the house falls down without, I take it, in that case, the aid of gas. But then thirdly and *viva vovs*, they may use these incentry bombs, for which one should be waiting in the top attic with a spade and bucket and sand for all as



"I think I've got your speech right, Sir. Is there anything you'd like to add?"

"No—except that I was wearing faultless evening-dress."



"My 'usband 'as been called up; 'e's 'ad a propriety telegram to report immediate."

if one was at the seaside. Well, each time so far that we have had a warning I have not been alone, and I leave it to Prosser to take a lead; but when I am in by myself, what am I to do? Am I to sit in the yard underneath the pigeon-house waiting for the dwelling to consume before my eyes, or am I to seal myself gas-tight into the coal-cellar with Tibbles if he is to be found, though he enjoys the coal-house, having once found a mouse there which he remembers yet, that cat having a memory like the proverbial elephant—or am I to be in the attic expected to pick one of those things up and fling it from me like seven devils each worse than the last, and me having no protection more than my gas-mask from the falling of other bombs? Or am I to run to and fro between the one place and the other like a dismantled hen, ready for all that comes? It has gone in two

places, I see, and will need, I should say, to be turned. Dear me—after all those curtains too, and the machine a lent one and needed back. Well, really, but what is one to do?"

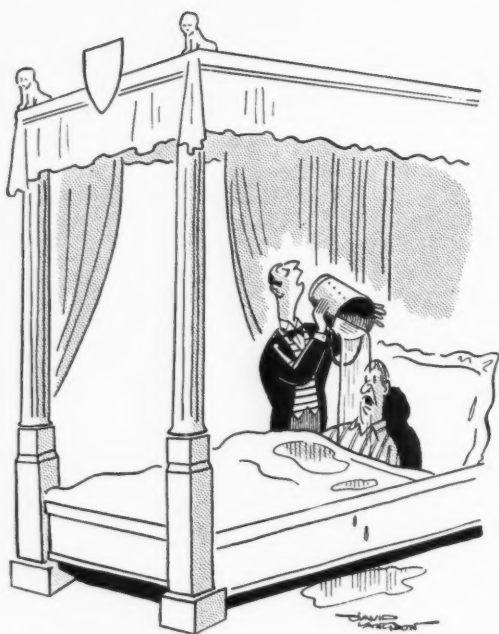
She stood back from the doorway as if in contemplation of these several possibilities, and I saw my opportunity.

"Even as you said, Mrs. Prosser," I remarked, preparing to make a dash for it—"I do not know."

o o

— With the Lid On

"Arrangements have been made by the War Office to ensure that unexploded bombs and shells are dealt with safely."—*Daily Paper*



"Nine o'clock, your Grace."

Soldiers

"THIS 'ere war fair gets a chap down,"
Says old Jem Sludger, bendin' a angry frown
On what 'ad been a pint of old-and-mild
But wasn't any more. "There's times when I gets that
wild
'Earin' about this 'Itler that I seems to go all pothery in
the 'ead."
"Ar," says Ned
The carrier, "like last night when you drunk Charlie
Mace's beer by mistake
And fergot to buy 'im another.
It must be a orful bother
To 'ave nerves like that. You'd ought to take
Something for it, Jem."
"Oh, I'd ought, did I?" says Jem, indignant like. "Well, I
don't 'old to be one of them
As never makes a mistake. Furthermore, when I was a
soldier,"
Says Jem, turnin' on young Bert 'Awkins, the militiaman,
wot was larfin' be'ind 'is 'and,
"You spoke respectful to your betters or they very soon
told yer."
"Ar," says Bert, "and a fine line of thin red 'eroes you was,
wasn't you?"
"Mebbe we wasn't all lance-jacks," says Jem, cockin' 'is
eye at Bert's stripe, "but we done wot we 'ad to do
On a bob a day, and bully beef if you could get it, and no
flowers by request;
So there's no call for you to stick out your chest

Just because you gets more pay and 'ot and cold laid on in
barracks and people writin' to the papers if you gets a
cold in the 'ead

Or the sergeant fergets to tuck you up in bed."

"Oh, 'ark to old Jem," says Ned:

"'Igh Life in the Royal Tripeshires, by One 'oo was There.
Ferget it and 'ave another pint."

"Thank 'ee," says Jem.

"It's 'ard to be a pore old soldier. Well, good-day, all,
I got ter get.

And mind you don't get them feet of yours wet,
Young Bert," 'e says, "and you'll be a sergeant yet."

"Rummy old geezer!" said the fat stranger sittin' all alone
in a bowler-'at,

"But you didn't ought ter make fun of 'im like that,
'Im bein' a bit barmy like."

"Wot! Old Jem barmy?" says Bert. "Well, strike
Me pink! D'yer 'ear that, Joe?" 'e says to Joe the potman.
"Would that make you larf?"

"Not 'arf

It don't!" says Joe;

"Why, old Jem Sludger's the biggest leg-puller I ever
know."

"Well," says the stranger, "I did think as 'ow 'e was
layin' it on a bit thick with that pore old soldier stuff,
Right enough."

"Ar, and don't you make no mistake about that neither,"
says Bert.

"Jem was a proper soldier, 'e was. All through South
Africa. Farrier-Sergeant, 'e was. Got the D.C.M.
for bringin' in a officer what was 'urt.

I'm 'is nephew, and I ought to know.

Ain't that right, Joe?"

ALCOL.



"By my balidom!"



Porter. "DO I KNOW IF THE ROOSHUNS HAS REALLY COME THROUGH ENGLAND? WELL, SIR, IF THIS DON'T PROVE IT I DON'T KNOW WHAT DO. A TRAIN WENT THROUGH HERE FULL, AND WHEN IT COME BACK I KNOWED THERE'D BIN ROOSHUNS IN IT, 'CAUSE THE CUSHIONS AND FLOORS WAS COVERED WITH SNOW."

F. W. Illingworth, September 23rd, 1914

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Eaglet Towards the Sun

To the tragically foregone conclusion of the life of *The Prince Imperial* (PUTNAM, 10/6) MRS. KATHERINE JOHN prefixes a gracefully disillusioned narrative of what is less the career of young LOUIS NAPOLEON than the careers of young LOUIS NAPOLEON'S set. A smaller shapelier book would have better suited that small shapely life; for, as Mrs. JOHN herself notes, its twenty-three years were singularly of a piece, and her book—ultimately so excellent—is not. One wearies of watching the much-biographed EUGÉNIE handled as "the Imperial Pamela"; and when the Emperor is trounced for using his son's military ardour as publicity, one recalls how bitterly the French have always resented a monarchy unduly reserved. With the exile in England, Mrs. JOHN'S sympathy—and her artistry—is aroused; and there can be nothing but praise for her relation of the last adventure and its sequel, when the youth, forbidden to fight for France, fell with eighteen wounds (all in front) beneath the assegais of England's enemies. Throughout these last two chapters there is strength and beauty: strength to flout conventions—as in the great-hearted rôle assigned to QUEEN VICTORIA—and beauty perceived with reverence and offered unadorned to the perceptive.

Something to Laugh at

No air-raid shelter should be without a funny book, and Mr. FRANK SULLIVAN'S *Sullivan at Bay* (DENT, 6/-) will do admirably. "Meet the Cliché Expert!" say the publishers, seeming to imply that that polite man is Mr. SULLIVAN himself; but readers of *The New Yorker* know better. Undoubtedly Mr. SULLIVAN is a cliché expert—ridicule of clichés is the foundation of nearly all his fun—but the cliché expert is *Mr. Arbuthnot*, with whom he has such long, informative and affable conversations. In the book there are nine of these and twenty other pieces, including "A Visit to London, by One who has Never been There" ("Passing through Upper Tooting on the way home, I was interested in seeing the offices of the famous humorous weekly, *Punch*, or 'The Thunderer' as the English affectionately call it. Once a week the staff of *Punch* lunch together and then, over the port, decide on the cover for the next week"). There are burlesque love-stories ("Love Makes the Filly Go" and "The Ugly Mollusc"), burlesque political gossip ("A Week-End at Lady Astor's"), and straightforward fun about pencil-chewing or getting one's own breakfast. It is all fresh, light, excellently written, funny and particularly valuable at the moment.

Man and War

Mr. RALPH BATES is unlucky in the hour of the publication of his new book. Few people, for the present, will want to read more about that beastly thing called war than their

daily papers have to tell them; and most of the stories grouped under the title of one of them, *The Miraculous Horde* (CAPE, 7/6), are stories of war. But it would be a pity if good literature, whatever its theme, should be neglected in these ugly days; for that, being a manifestation of the free spirit, is one of the things for which we are fighting. And Mr. BATES's stories are very good literature indeed, told with a vividness and clarity which seem to owe something to the nature and the art of that Spain which, with the kindred country of Mexico, is the scene of them. Moreover, their theme is not so much war as humanity caught in the toils of war, men and women rebelling against the necessity which drives them, bound to a cause yet with their hearts in the village which bore them, or the field which is their own, fiercely defending their individuality against annihilation. Mr. BATES writes with an artist's detachment; but in essence his book is a vindication of the rights of man. Nor, under the obsession of the hour, must we forget to take delight in the beauties of description in it, the humour, and the excitements which have nothing to do with battle.

The World of Sludge

It is to be hoped (vainly, perhaps) that one feature at least of the late war will not be renewed in this one: the swarm of clairvoyants, mediums and so forth who battered on the sorrows and anxieties of non-combatants. Chiefly from this point of view—one notes also the careful and competent technique of a very dingy little piece of genre-painting—*Trance by Appointment* (HARRAP, 7/6) is well worth perusing. It depicts the pathetically squalid fortunes of a child endowed with second sight and the gift's fraudulent exploitation by her world and (in ultimate despair of resistance to her world) by herself. *Jean's* talent is hereditary. Her grandmother and mother possessed it, though the latter declared that it never brought anybody luck. Finally, *Jean's* child by the infamous Mr. Mitch of horoscope fame betrayed the same endowments; and *Jean*, who had endeavoured to break with her rapacious partner, abandoned the struggle. Miss G. E. TREVELYAN is scrupulously fair to her thieves' kitchen; and the jocond *Madame Eva*, who inducts *Jean* into the card and crystal business, is handled with something like affection as the one fairly luminous spot on a resolutely gloomy horizon.



"Now don't you dare come in here and tell me you think you've got measles."

"Yeller-Feller"

Life in the "Empty North" of Australia would seem to be a hectic business. Here is *Capricornia* (RICH AND COWAN, 8/6), written by Mr. XAVIER HERBERT (winner of the Commonwealth Literary Prize, given in celebration of Australia's one hundred and fiftieth anniversary) and received with a chorus of praise by the Press of that continent. It is a truly tremendous novel, containing more than five hundred and forty large pages of fairly small print, and a list of "Principal Characters" which in itself occupies four of them. Also it is filled with murders, fatal accidents, troopers of police, black trackers, and so forth. But one must confess the book makes difficult reading. No one not well acquainted with the country can be expected to struggle successfully with the extraordinary lingo in which the dialogue is chiefly conducted. For the rest, the story deals with two small Government officials—Oscar and Mark Shillingsworth—and the half-caste son of the latter. Originally called *No Name*, corrupted into *Naw-nim*, he eventually develops into Mr. Norman Shillingsworth, but remains to the end a "yeller-feller" in the eyes of even the poorest whites. Even so he is perhaps the least unpleasing character in an immense gallery.

Unfriendly Partners

Mr. R. PHILMORE may with reason be accused of having paid more attention to the plot of *Death in Arms* (COLLINS, 7/6) than to those who, in one way or another, were concerned with it. A murder led the police to suspect that strange things were happening in the factories of Hainsworth and Gooch, but in spite of several industrious investigations some time passed (and another murder occurred) before either the shady work in the factories or the criminal-in-chief were discovered. Mr. PHILMORE has been successful in creating an atmosphere of mystery and suspense, but this tale is not really effective because, apart from *Sergeant Peckover*, its leading actors, whether suspicious or suspected, lack individuality.

"A war reserve constable, giving his assent to the terms of attestation at Marylebone Police Court yesterday said 'I will.'
'No,' replied the magistrate's clerk, 'you are not getting married. YoYu should say 'I do.'"
—*Daily Paper*.
What's that fcreigner got to do with it?

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Charivaria

It has been estimated that there are nearly a quarter of a million people in German concentration camps. Still, they have the consolation of knowing that HITLER has liberated them.

A Territorial who reported at Blackburn was found to take size fourteen in boots. They'll never get a war to fit a fellow like that.

"Why," asks a writer, "can't Europe live as one big family?" The trouble seems to be that it does live just as most big families do.

"Londoners who have been in the same block of flats for years have now spoken to each other for the first time," it is stated. When peace comes, however, we doubt if this will count.



German propaganda is urging all Germans to keep a stiff upper lip. A national cultivation of That Moustache might help.

GOERING is reported to be getting much thinner owing to the shortage of nourishing food in Germany. It is feared that his batman may soon have to wear some of his medals for him.

A mouse marked and released in this country was caught in France. This seems to lend colour to a rumour that the authorities have constructed a secret Channel Tunnel.

An Impending Apology

"Mr. Ernest Brown, Minister of Labour, announced in the House of Commons yesterday his intention to appoint a 'capable man' as chairman of a committee otherwise composed in equal numbers of representatives of employers' federations and trade unions."—*Daily Paper*.

News of a daring burglary comes from Berlin. Dinner was stolen while the family were upstairs putting on their jewels.

"The first women bus conductresses appeared in Manchester yesterday."—*Daily Paper*.

What, female ones?

A correspondent does not think the "black-out" in London is too good. He complains that bits of the Albert Hall are still visible to Londoners at night.

There has been comment on the fact that HITLER was not wearing a steel helmet on his visit to the Eastern Front. The explanation, we understand, is that the FUEHRER is more accustomed to talking through other types of head-gear.

A correspondent complains that his omnibus was so dark inside the other night that he took home his own umbrella in mistake for a better one.



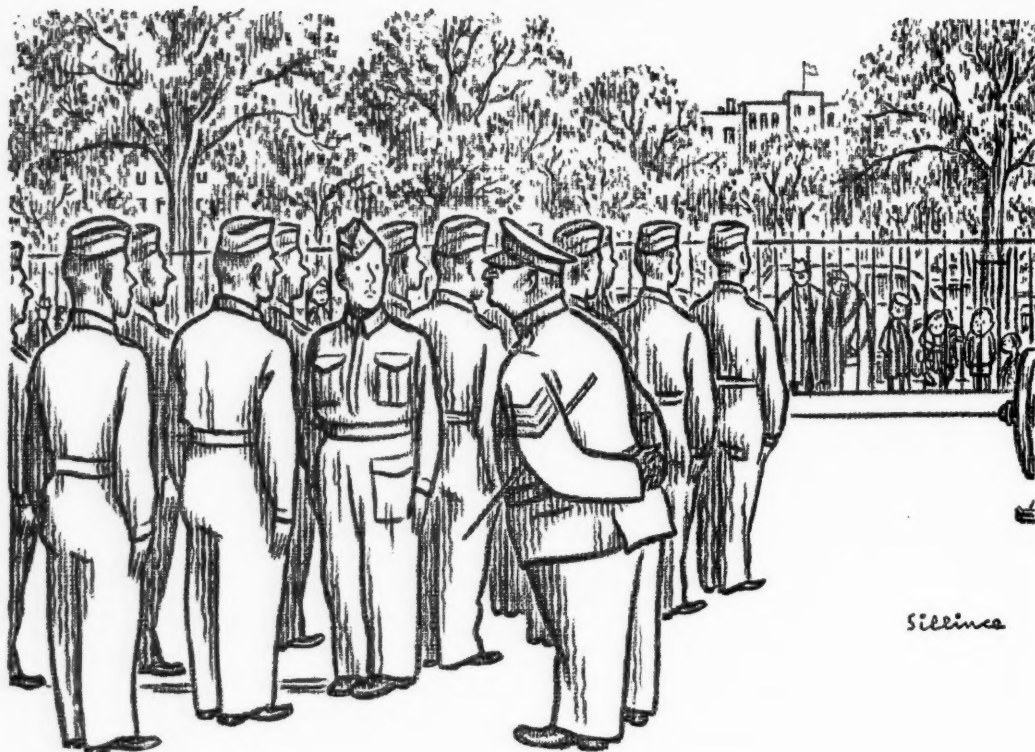
It is estimated that if all Jewish refugees who have accepted Germany's invitation to return were placed end to end in Hyde Park he would look conspicuous.

It is stated that London nurserymen are running out of ornamental shrubs. What a quaint form of exercise!

We hear that kindly Zoo attendants have arranged for several open sandbags into which nervous ostriches can plunge their heads.

"How To Avoid Cabbage-Cooking Odours," says a heading. Wear your gas-mask.





Sillence

"It's an old tradition in the Southern Skirmishers, Private Bideford-Dawlish, that when a Sergeant says 'Left turn' one turns to the left."

With the A.F.S.

Foam, Sweet Foam

ONE of the first hard lessons we auxiliary firemen have to learn is the inadequacy of the old notion that water was the enemy of fire. Boy and man I was brought up to believe that when flames burst through the floor you slung water on them and if necessary more water, and then went on with whatever you were doing. But in many cases this is very far from the truth, for there are certain sorts of fire to which as little as a bucket of the stuff is as big a tonic as a week-end at Brighton.

The Fire Brigade still works nominally on a squirt-squirt-can basis, but even if it arrives at a fire clinging to an engine designed to spread the Serpentine impartially over the attics of Kensington there is much difficult thinking ahead of it before it dares uncork. If the flames are raging among any of the articles on a list as long as your boot all offers of water must be firmly waved aside and strong arms must reach out quickly for things called chemical extinguishers. Luckily for the great reading public there is nothing I do not know about these terrible weapons.

It is several months now since I won my spurs among them. The afternoon was very hot, and I was the only new boy silly enough to turn up. My instructor, a most kindly

man, scratched his head and then led me to the changing-room, that being the coolest place in the station.

"Ever had anything to do with foam extinguishers?" he asked.

"Never," I told him with a slight shudder.

"Well, you can now," he said, picking up what looked like a smallish scarlet pillar-box which had sprouted a bit of beer-engine at one end. "It's got two sorts of chemical in it. When the old how-d'ye-do's this way up, they're kept separate, but when you turn her over something slips inside and they mix."

"The same principle as Doctor Seidlitz so happily discovered?" I hazarded.

"The very same."

"And when they mix?"

"Hell's let loose." My professor had sailed the Seven Seas and had front-seats at many famous fires, but he blenched. "Nothing stops her for about five minutes."

"A powerful jet?"

"Powerful? Man-eating And Gawd! Talk about a mess!"

He unscrewed the budding beer-engine and showed me

the two compartments inside the main body. I noted they were filled with dirty water, I supposed to make up the weight for practice purposes. After that he screwed the cylinder together again and handed it to me.

"You may as well get the feel of it," he said.

I got the feel of it very quickly, for it was extremely heavy. Then I did a thing for which, looking back, I cannot blame myself a scrap. I turned the extinguisher over.

Well within a second I knew that the liquid inside, whatever else it might be, was not practice water. Before I could cry "999" a thick firm jet was on its way and had begun to cover the hanging caps and uniforms of my fellow flame-sockers with a bubbling yellow cream which gave the impression that someone had made a lot of mayonnaise with soda-water. The amount of the stuff which piled up in those first few seconds of paralysis was incredible. Complete outfits, boots and all, were transformed into quivering mounds of trifle. In a half-formed desire to be fair to everyone I moved the jet slowly down the wall and wrote my name and category over a long line of blue overalls, putting the full-stop squarely on my instructor's trousers. The air was full of a greasy slithering sound which sickened the soul. Terror and madness gripped me, and I was in the act of turning the jet on myself in a well-meant effort at hara-kiri when a voice like a fog-horn caught me amidsthips.

"Out on the roof!" it roared.

Out on the roof I ran, pausing only to turn the upper half of a messenger boy into a rather modernistic bust and to write several lines of faltering Arabic on the passage wall.

"Find the drain!"

I am never much good at finding things, and now my ghastly burden robbed me of any power of concentration. Playing here and there on the spotless roof of the station the jet was piling up great mountains of slimy foam. For the sake of my career in the A.F.S. it suddenly seemed wiser to direct it out into the street, and staggering over to the parapet I did so. Standing on tip-toe, I looked over the edge. There was a small man in a bowler-hat walking in the middle of the road, and at that moment the mayonnaise caught him in the face with a deafening slap and fetched him up dead in his tracks. It took a few seconds to envelop him completely. Lot's wife came first to mind, then the thought that if only his collar had been made of lettuce he would have been worth his weight in gold on the cold table of a club. Life returned to him slowly. When at length it was back he tottered oozily out of sight, quite dazed, and was never heard of again.

A further roar informed me that my companion had not only found the drain but torn off its grating. As I hurried across the roof towards him one of my rubber boots was trapped by a rushing river and I found myself flat on my back, clasping the extinguisher so that its nozzle was just inside my overalls. They had filled up into a tight balloon of mayonnaise by the time I got to my feet. As I squelched over to the drain in the manner of a performing seal, the jet was showing the first unmistakable signs of fatigue, for although it registered a lovely bull on my companion's chest, he held his ground. Together we propped the extinguisher against the drain. Then we stood up and faced each other gravely. I couldn't help wondering what was coming next.

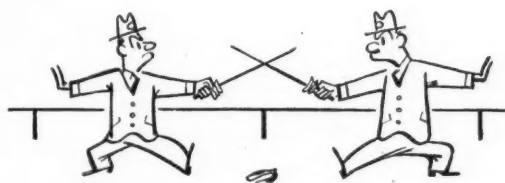
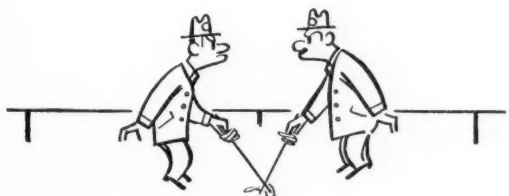
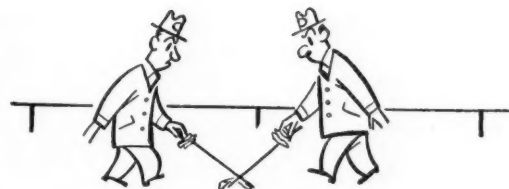
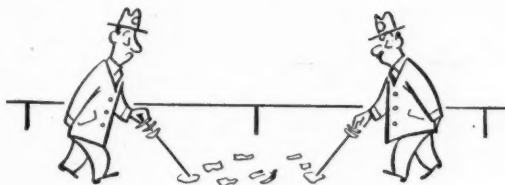
To his eternal credit all he said was "Coo!" But never shall I forget how he said it.

ERIC.

Traffic Problem

"The Stock Market closed 5 to 25 points higher due to public buying of War Babies."—*Birmingham Paper*.

DAVID LANGDON



Knowledge and Silence

I KNOW the rumours, all the deep confidings,
Any that you know I knew just as soon—
Let us sit down and *not* reveal the tidings
We learnt this afternoon.

All things we know—mysterious frozen gases,
And tremulous mines that hang on gasbag chains,
What army, where, for what strange purpose masses,
And what spies lurk in drains.

Was it not I who told you first the fable
Told me in confidence as twilight fell
Of those weird words that flashed by Orient cable
And told you not to tell?

Was it not you that mentioned first the losses
Suffered by Nazis of that death's head group,
Rewarded after meals with iron crosses,
Who taste Herr Hitler's soup?

Strange rays of death and bombs past all describing,
Starvations imminent and *ersatz* clothes,
Neutrals about to cede to resolute bribing
We hide with hard-sworn oaths.

Let us sit down in dumb self-abnegation
Lest anything we hint at, great or small,
Should reach the Ministry of Information,
Which knows no news at all.

EVOE.

o o

Letters from a Gunner

XV

MY DEAR MOTHER,—It is a little difficult to be flippant over an outbreak of war. It has the curious effect of intensifying one's personal consciousness while making one realise only too vividly that human beings are as sands of the sea, minute eddies in the drifting stream of time, etc., just as one has always been told but never previously believed. All that one has read of this and that division being sacrificed to obtain some trifling objective comes flooding back with most unpleasant vividness. One is now part of these damned divisions. On the other hand, fortunately, A.A. gunners are not people to be flung recklessly into the front line. Believe me, it is a thought which affords me considerable satisfaction.

The events which led up to the actual declaration were exciting enough. On Sunday morning, from eight o'clock onwards, messages began to arrive—messages that left no doubt in our minds that the balloon was on the point of departure. "Man all stations," imposed no strain. We had done that for some days. "Prepare to take action against any air or ground attack," was much more ominous. Had Hitler landed a secret army, ready to march against our various batteries? I visualised swarms of grey-clad figures appearing round the hedge and saying, in grim tones and a guttural accent, "Pack up, chaps. We have you cold"; or swarms of planes descending and using us as machine-gun targets. However, neither fear was realised.

Then we heard Mr. Chamberlain on our Battery wireless set, followed by a very efficient set of announcements, and

at last a message, "War is declared." It had started. One of the big moments of history. I went away and had a shave. It sounds an anti-climax, but I had been up most of the previous night.

We are now in the throes of a fine pseudo-spy campaign. Unauthorised visitors are not allowed. So far our bag is as follows:—

(1) A flight-lieutenant from the R.A.F. He drove up a lane near the guns, switched off the lights on his car and apparently settled down to keep us under close observation. This suspicious behaviour was immediately reported to me by the Orderly Sergeant, and, calling together a picket, we surrounded the car with infinite stealth. When the car was completely surrounded I walked up to it. There were voices inside. "But, darling, you know I love you. Honestly, she doesn't mean a thing to me," was what I heard. In the end we parted on the best of terms and I am invited to the wedding. If I go, I'll lay you long odds it will not be the same girl.

(2) A retired major. It would have been all right if the major had not been so damned inquisitive and, in my case, if he hadn't referred so frequently to the 9th Poona Horse. My sense of humour may be over-developed, but I declined absolutely to believe in the Poona Horse. It is just too P. G. Wodehouse, and for all I know the Germans may be very fond of P. G. Wodehouse too. The Battery-Commander was very decent about it and said I did the right thing, but unfortunately he *did* know the Poona Horse—in fact he had met some of them in Mesopotamia in the last war. In the end the major quite understood, but it was difficult going at first.

(3) A colonel from the Officers Emergency Reserve. I regard this as a very excusable mistake. Is one really to be expected to recognise a colonel when he appears in khaki shorts, a torn cricket shirt with an I Zingari tie, string round his waist and a panama on his head? Not on active service, in any event. He took it very well and stood me a drink.

So you see, we have our moments.

We also had one other scare, with lamentable results. A major from another battery decided to visit us and, with unparalleled presumption, thought he would test our sentries by stopping his car a hundred yards or so away and seeing if he could enter the camp unobserved. He was unsuccessful. He was challenged coming through a hedge; in an instant the guard was turned out, the whole camp was in an uproar and he was hauled off to the guard-tent, where of course he was recognised.

We all thought the incident was closing when my unfortunate batman, Gunner Killey, came panting up and gasped out, "It's all right, Sir. He can't get away. I've let all the air out of his tyres."

Gunner Killey then had time to glance round the tent and see the visiting major. His face dropped.

"Blimey," he said. "It's the Major's car."

It was.

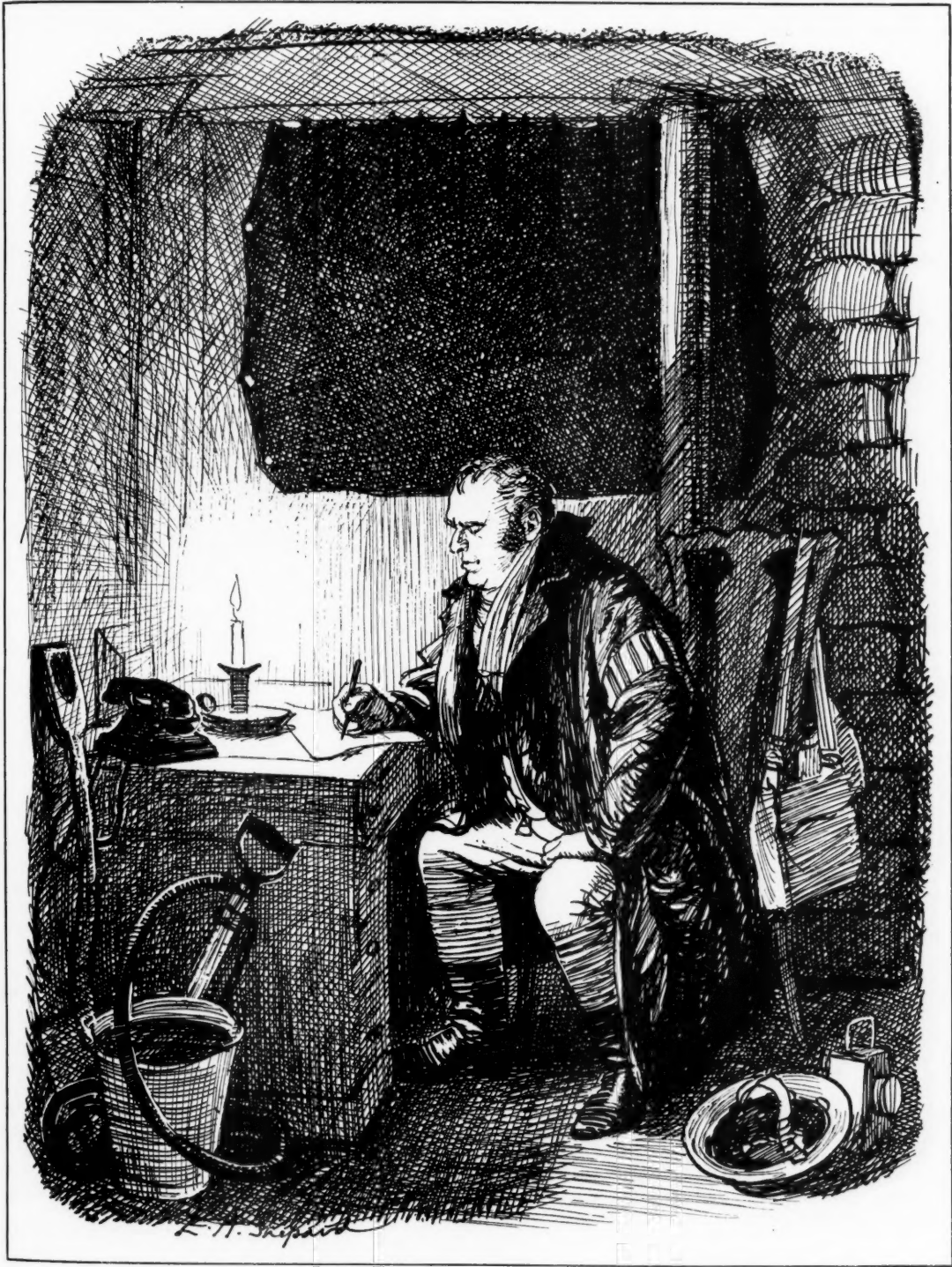
Gunner Killey is now muttering about trying for a transfer to the Army Pay Corps or some similar haven of rest.

Your loving Son,
HAROLD.

o o

Cop's Corner

"Paramount Theatre.—From to-day and all next week: 'Beau Geste,' starring Gary Cooper, Ray Milland, Robert Preston and Brian Donlevy—a new version of Police-constable Wren's romantic story of the French Foreign Legion."—*Manchester Paper*.



REGISTERED

"Name, J. Bull: Occupation, Seeing it Through."



"Well, dear old boy, here's mud in your eye."

Nature Study

IF there's one thing I can't bear more than I can't bear anything else," said Mr. Sissifernes, taking Natural History at the Institute, "it's drain-pipes—brown earthenware drain-pipes. When they've got a black band round them it means they're 'Seconds'—cheaper than when they haven't got black bands round them; but my brother Wilbur did not know that when he got his head stuck in one."

"When did he get his head stuck in one, Mr. Sissifernes?" we asked dreamily.

"Yes," said Mr. Sissifernes, "and Mr. Arbuthnot was furious and wanted to write to the sanitary inspector, only he could not find any paper and ink, and, as I pointed out to him, it wasn't much good writing to a sanitary inspector at three o'clock in the morning."

"After all," I said to him, "here are all the little red lamps, in accordance

with the by-laws and Ministry of Transport Regulations, and a board saying "Road Up." As far as I can see, the sanitary inspector can wash his hands of the whole business. Wilbur should not have been walking on all fours."

"I was always very fair-minded, you see," Mr. Sissifernes explained. "Seeing the other fellow's point of view too clearly is one of my weaknesses. I can quite understand why the Council won't go on with this Natural History class, for instance, if the attendance falls; that's why I try to make it interesting."

"Thank you, Mr. Sissifernes," we said.

"So we bent down over the drain-pipe to try to make out what it was saying, but it was all muffled and incoherent. Mr. Arbuthnot thought Wilbur might be saying he wanted us to get him out, and in that case the best

thing would be to wait until the shops opened and then ring up Harridge's and get a set of drain-rods. He had always wanted a set of drain-rods, Mr. Arbuthnot had, only up to now he had not been able to find an excuse for getting them."

"You know what they're like—bamboo things in sections with brass ends, and you screw them together and poke them down; and there's a rubber washer on the end for pushing things out that end, or a sort of iron cork-screw affair that grabs hold of things and pulls them out this end. You can sweep chimneys with them too in your spare time."

"I wish he would not keep waving his legs about," Mr. Arbuthnot went on squeamishly, after we had been silent a short time. "He reminds me of Bill the Lizard, and lizards always make me sick."

"So I sat on my brother Wilbur's

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legs" (said Mr. Sissifernes) "to make them stop making Mr. Arbuthnot feel sick, and Mr. Arbuthnot went and shouted loudly and clearly to the drain-pipe: 'Would you rather be pushed out with a rubber washer or pulled out with a corkscrew thing when we get our drain-rods?'"

"The drain-pipe made no answer save a subdued moaning, and it occurred to me then that my brother Wilbur might be slowly suffocating in an accumulation of foul air.

"I mentioned this to Mr. Arbuthnot, but he said No, he thought it unlikely as the drain was not connected to anything, it only lay on the side of the road ready to be used in the morning, and although this end might be full of Wilbur, the other end was open to the sweet cool air of night.

"Let's pace it out," I said, 'and see how much Wilbur will have to carry on his head if we just stand him upright and guide him home. After all,' I said, 'Covent Garden porters carry miles high of baskets on their heads in the busy season. Why should not Wilbur carry a few feet of drain-pipe?'"

"It's heavier," said Mr. Arbuthnot; 'and no one would pay him. You don't do things with so much heart if nobody's paying you.'

"When we got to the end of the pipe" (Mr. Sissifernes continued) "I said it was eight paces, but Mr. Arbuthnot said he made it forty-one, and offered to fight me.

"We'll strike an average," I said, because, as I have explained to you, I always consider fairly the other fellow's point of view, and anyway I did not want to fight Mr. Arbuthnot just then. 'Eight and forty-one is forty-nine, and half forty-nine—'

"Listen!" said Mr. Arbuthnot, who had fallen over. 'I can hear Wilbur!'

"Of course!" I said. 'How stupid of us not to have thought of it before! If we place our heads close to this end of the drain it will act as a speaking-tube. It reminds me of when I was a little boy and used to play telephones down a hose-pipe. I used to put one end of the hose-pipe close to my ear and speak into the other end, and if it wasn't full of water I could hear myself quite plainly.'

"So did I," said Mr. Arbuthnot, and began to cry, because memories of his happy childhood always made him. He leaned on the end of the drain to cry, and it rolled away from him down into the ditch, and that was how we found out that the drain was not jointed.

"We were very happy then, because we realised we might be able to get at

Wilbur from this end. One section after another we rolled away, and every section brought us three feet nearer to Wilbur.

"When we got to the very last one, Mr. Arbuthnot put his head in it to see if he could see Wilbur, and he got his stuck."

Mr. Sissifernes stopped and sighed deeply. He took a stub of chalk from his pocket and began playing noughts-and-crosses with himself on his tabletop. We coughed discreetly and he rubbed out the chalk marks furtively and went on:

"If my brother Wilbur had not been asleep by then there would have been some dreadful language bandied about in that small dim space.

"I was half distracted" — Mr. Sissifernes shuddered—"and half sick, because now, with Wilbur's legs twitching slightly out of one end of the drain-pipe like antennæ and Mr. Arbuthnot's waving wildly out of the other like legs, it reminded me of a monstrous earwig, and earwigs make me sicker than lizards make Mr. Arbuthnot.

"I picked up a large stone in a sort of frenzy, you know, and threw it at the earwig and it broke. Mr. Arbuthnot sat up with a bleeding ear, looking rather vacant, while a jagged shard of pottery stuck like a crown upon Wilbur's head. He was free, though. He got up slowly and said, 'It's a bit tight, but it'll do till I find the blighter who's got mine. Call yourself a cloak-room!'"

"Did I explain, gentlemen, that this all took place after a Headmasters' Conference Dinner? At Blackpool or somewhere, I believe."

"No, Mr. Sissifernes," we said.

"I used to be a headmaster," he

explained. "I used to attend conferences.

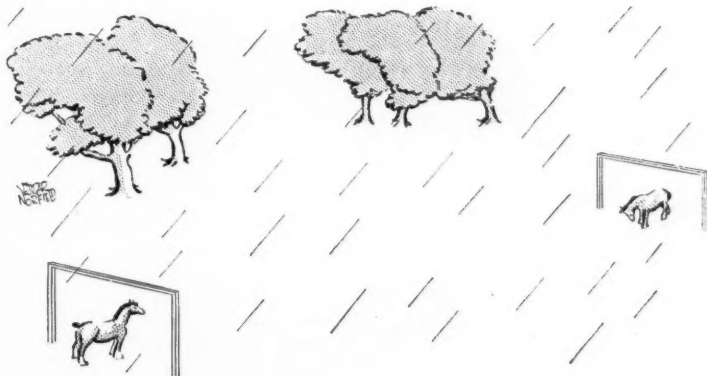
"After that my brother Wilbur wanted to fight Mr. Arbuthnot for getting into his drain, and, lunging at him, fell into the arms of the night watchman who had just come up to look at his lamps and who turned out to be a decent and understanding soul. It was he who told us that drain-pipes with black bands round them were Seconds, and so it would only cost us fifteen shillings for the one we had broken, which was very honest of him really, because we should not have known any better if he had told us it was a First and cost twenty-five. He also said he had a nephew who ran a haulage contractors, and would come and take us to our hotel in a lorry for twelve-and-six each, as there were no taxis about.

"So we gave him fifteen shillings for breaking the drain-pipe, and thirty-seven and eightpence to ring up his nephew, and when he came back he started frying large fat rashers of bacon over his fire on a shovel in the pale light of dawn.

"Which was unfortunate, because, feeling as we did then," concluded Mr. Sissifernes, "the smell of hot fat rashers made me and Mr. Arbuthnot and Wilbur sicker than lizards or earwigs. But somehow we felt better afterwards. Which just goes to show you—"

Mr. Sissifernes stopped for a long time. We thought he had gone to sleep. We prodded him gently and he sat up with a start. "Ah, yes," he began hurriedly. "What was I saying?—Earwigs, forficula auricularia, a harmless and virtuous insect, gentlemen, the only insect that loves its young—"

But we thought that had better wait for another time, and the class broke up.



"I told you it was still summer."

Little Fiddle-on-the-Green Still Smiling

I

"*LA guerre comme à la guerre*," was the rather apposite quotation uttered by Miss Pin, only about five minutes after the *guerre* had started—and one would have had nothing but praise for such a ready grasp of the (international) situation but for feeling that she chose the wrong person to whom to say it.

The recipient of Miss Pin's *mot*—as the Maginot Line calls it—was Mr. Pancatto, and not only Mr. Pancatto, who, as an author, prefers uttering his own *mots* to applauding other people's, but Mr. Pancatto just after he had been insulted by the A.R.P. at Fiddle Magna.

Guided by the example of the Ministry of Information, one will try to give the public an account of the incident, leaving out anything in the nature of information and everything in the nature of Mr. Pancatto's language.

The long day, with its stream of gas-masks, sandbags, stirrup-pumps, dug-outs, volunteers, tin hats, telephone calls and inquiries about air-raid protection for canaries, had drawn to a close.

The quiet twilight hour of blackened windows, special constables, lampless motor-cars, colliding pedestrians and mislaid electric torches had set in. Alone in a dear little room very kindly lent by the Chapel Guild of Ladies sat Mr. Pancatto, taking night-duty at the telephone. As he said himself, it was the first time he'd sat down for weeks.

Towards half-past one in the morning a most extraordinary and almost totally unforeseen thing happened. The telephone bell rang.

With soldierly coolness and promptitude Mr. Pancatto put down the crossword puzzle, sheathed his pencil (or more probably dropped it and it rolled away in whatever direction one would never have thought it *could* roll by all the laws of gravity), and took up the receiver and uttered some official phrase, such as "Hullo!"

In reply he was told that Headquarters was speaking. Reaching for his gas-mask, Mr. Pancatto said very briefly: "Yes?"

And, believe it or not, Mr. Pancatto's Headquarters informed him that he had been rung up in order to make sure that he was awake.

It has proved impossible to get a detailed account of what happened next. If Mr. Pancatto said even five-eighths of the things that he said he said, then why hasn't he been taken away by the police?

The only absolutely certain thing is that he demanded an apology, saying—but surely with more spirit than accuracy—that he should expect one without fail.

And the whole of the next day, instead of seeing about the substitution of a large-size gas-mask in place of a medium-size for the Rectory cook, Mr. Pancatto was asking everybody in Little Fiddle-on-the-Green whether they thought he was just *playing* at war or what?

Everybody of course said No, they didn't think that, and Miss Pin went so far as to add that she wouldn't blame Mr. Pancatto in the least if he simply left the war to get on as best it could without him. Far from that, however, Mr. Pancatto returned to

night-duty at the A.R.P. office—or room lent by the Chapel Guild of Ladies—the very next evening.

He had, there is reason to believe, got to Twenty-eight Down in the crossword puzzle, and the end was in sight, when the telephone bell rang.

"This is A.R.P. Headquarters at Fiddle Magna speaking," said a voice that Mr. Pancatto, on his own declaration, recognised perfectly.

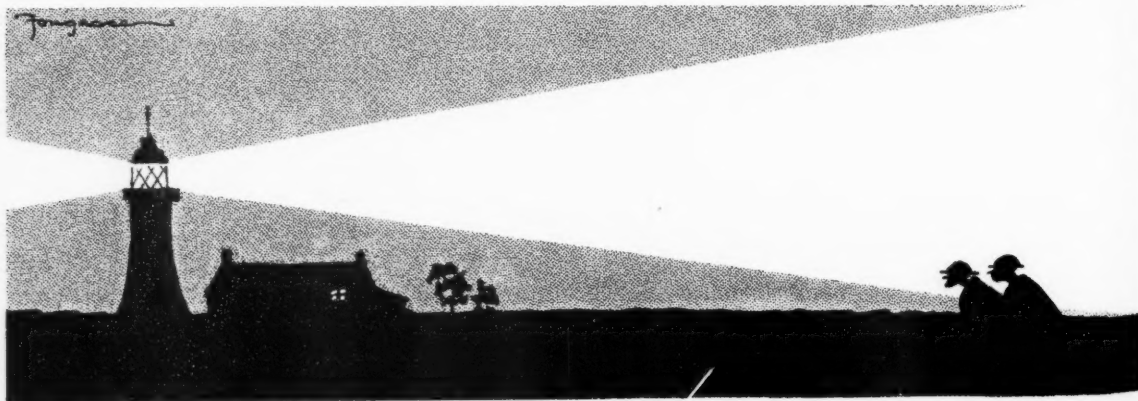
And before Mr. Pancatto could begin to say any of the things that he'd been saying all day, or any of those that he'd prepared through the watches of the night, the voice added:

"We're ringing up to make sure you're there to receive an apology."

E. M. D.

IN CASE YOU ARE SURPRISED

The pages in colour which follow, dedicated to the arrival of autumn, were prepared and printed, as the reader will no doubt understand, before the outbreak of hostilities, and for this reason contain no reference to war conditions and betray no consciousness of the present state of Great Britain either by night or day. Many may feel that they are none the worse for that.



"Good heavens, Tompkins, just look at the light in that cottage window!!!"